

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
THE
GREATEST AMERICAN

JENNINGS

M 1757

1. 1909

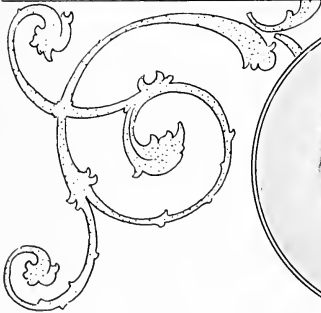
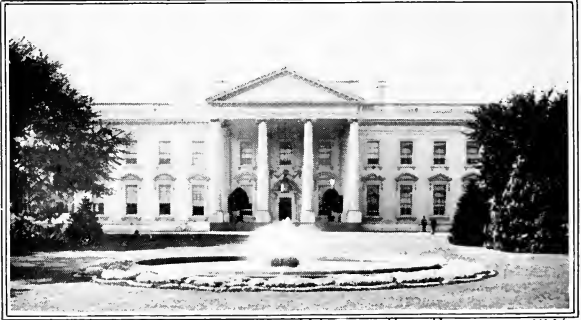
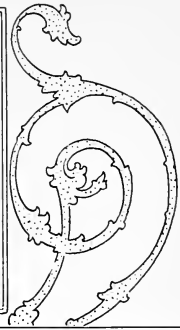
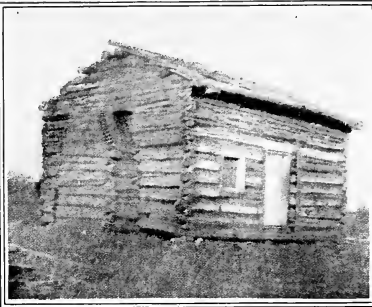
2. 1914

—
LINCOLN NATIONAL
LIFE FOUNDATION

M 1757 10 22
W. H. Crook
June 15. 1907

Compliments of the Author

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
The Institute of Museum and Library Services through an Indiana State Library LSTA Grant



A. Lincoln.

✓
Abraham Lincoln
The
Greatest American

By
JANET JENNINGS



Dedicated

*To the plain people of the Nation he saved—To the
University of Wisconsin that honors his memory.*

Copyright, 1909

By

JANET JENNINGS

Cantwell Printing Company,
Madison, Wis.

PREFACE

Twenty-five years and more, in Washington journalism, afforded exceptional opportunity for conversations and interviews with those who knew Abraham Lincoln—personal friends in the early Illinois days, and later, in the White House.

A worshipper at the shrine of his memory—a gleaner in the harvest—I have given from time to time, facts and incidents in the newspapers with which I was associated—the *New York Tribune*, and the *New York Independent*. To these newspapers I am indebted for the courteous permission to here include in permanent form, some facts and incidents, that may be of permanent interest to the reader.

Abraham Lincoln as a lawyer, with facts and incidents leading to the Lincoln-Douglass debates—covering that part of his life opening to the world—were given to me in an interview, by the late Judge Lawrence Weldon, of the United States Court of Claims, in Washington, and ap-

Abraham Lincoln

peared in the "Lincoln Number" of the *Independent*, April 4, 1895—the same year in a book under copyright. It was among the forty-five contributions, making the most complete many-sided view, in one harmonious whole, of the man and the President, ever given to the American people. The facts and incidents of the visit to City Point, were given to me by Mr. William Crook—still in faithful service at the White House—in now and then conversation, and the story was written, with illustrations, for the *Tribune*, April 17, 1893. The incident of the plan to purchase the slaves in the Border States—never before published—was recently given to me in Washington, by Mr. Arthur Crisfield, a son of the late Representative Crisfield, Chairman of the Committee. To all who have given helpful encouragement in the venture of a "first book," I am truly grateful—and especially to the President of the University of Wisconsin, to Mr. Richard Lloyd Jones, and to Miss Clara Barton.

The Greatest American

The aim of this little book, and my sincere desire is—to offer the *best*, at the *smallest* cost, to the *largest* number of readers—the plain people, with whom Abraham Lincoln was more closely and sympathetically allied, than any President of this Nation; to influence and impress younger generations by precept and example of his life; to inspire the boy of to-day—the man of tomorrow—with that spirit of moral courage, which, above any other force, made Abraham Lincoln the Greatest American.

JANET JENNINGS.

McKinley Place, Monroe, Wisconsin,
June, 1909.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The

GREATEST AMERICAN

TWO pages in our history will never grow dim, but stand illumined to the end. On one we read—George Washington, the Father of his Country. On the other we read—Abraham Lincoln, the Savior of the Nation.

George Washington planted the seed of Americanism in the Revolution. Thomas Jefferson planted the seed of Democracy in the Declaration of Independence. American Democracy has the growth of a hundred years, and more.

Abraham Lincoln—the ideal of American Democracy—a boy—a man of the people—a President of the people. The influence of his life is a living presence in the humblest home. His father was a rolling stone that gathers no moss; his mother,

Abraham Lincoln

a forceful example of the unlettered great. Often he spoke of his mother in these words: "All that I am, all that I hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." To his mother, when a boy, he made the promise that held him throughout his life a strictly temperance man. "A promise is a promise forever," he said. "When made to a mother, it is doubly binding."

Born and reared in poverty—realistic poverty—counting his school days in the brief period of six months—Abraham Lincoln came up from obscurity to the most honored place in the gift of a great nation; not by the lever of wealth, or lucky political chance, but the steady lift of his own, innate, resistless, mental and moral strength—American Democracy, pure and undefiled. And always a never doubting, never wavering faith in a God of Justice and Mercy,—a faith frequently and frankly expressed in the simplicity of his inspired wisdom and prophecy. The plain people were his university. The Bible and John Bunyan, were his first text books.

The Greatest American

No President ever had a life so full, so varied, so unique in personality, from early boyhood—borrowing books to study by the cabin firelight of his home; earning his living on a river flatboat; splitting rails in the long stretches of law without clients; to ruler of a people—a people torn and rent asunder—in the balance, the life and freedom of four million human beings. All through those terrible years, worn and bent by the burden, yet steadfast in purpose, sublime in hope, supreme in the right; in his own words, “the right as God gives us to see the right.”

Abraham Lincoln was never a member of a church, but a regular attendant, and while President, going with his family to the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, a short walk from the White House. Here is what he termed his “Confession of Faith.”

“When any church will inscribe over its altar as its sole qualification for membership, the Saviour’s condensed statement of the substance of both Law and Gospel—

Abraham Lincoln

‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself’—that church will I join, with all my heart and all my soul.” While in the White House he said to a friend, Joshua Speed—“I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a better man. He was a practical Christian in every day life. The Golden Rule was his guide, and no President ever relied more reverently and constantly on Divine assistance, and believed more implicitly in the power of prayer, than Abraham Lincoln.

This spirit is like a prophecy in the words of farewell to his friends and neighbors, when leaving home for Washington:

“My Friends: No one not in my position can appreciate the sadness I feel at this parting. Here I have lived more than a quarter of a century; here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. I know not how soon I shall see

The Greatest American

you again. A duty devolves upon me which is, perhaps, greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He would never have succeeded except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without the same Divine Aid which sustained him, and in the same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support; and I hope you, my friends, will pray that I may receive Divine Assistance, without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain. Again, I bid you all an affectionate farewell."

The first week in May, 1863—Chancellorsville—was the darkest hour of the war—doubt, disaster, and defeat of the Army of the Potomac, under General Hooker. The record of their dead and wounded told how bravely they had fought, and lost. The country, weary of the long war, the draining taxes of gold and blood, discontent everywhere, pleas for peace piling his desk with letters, denunciation and

Abraham Lincoln

criticism. He knew their purport without reading them—knew of the forever vacant places in the hundred thousand households.

Visitors came and went—Senators, Members, and the Cabinet, with gloom on their faces—the White House as if a funeral within—people treading softly as if in fear of waking the dead. It was then, if ever, that Abraham Lincoln reeled and staggered under his burden, keeping the all night, lonely vigil—walking the floor of his office—the Secretary leaving at midnight, the last sound in his ear, that steady tramp—returning early in the morning to find the President had not been out of the room. But a light was on his face one morning—a dawn had come. Beside the cup of coffee on the table lay his written instructions to Hooker—to push forward, to fight again. A few weeks later the Army of the Potomac fought the battle again, and won—at Gettysburg.

It was in that night's vigil, walking the floor of his office, that Abraham Lincoln

The Greatest American

prayed, as he told General Sickles afterward, when asked about his anxiety. "I will tell you why I felt no anxiety about Gettysburg, when everybody seemed panic stricken over disasters, and nobody could say what was going to happen. I was oppressed, and the gloom was heavy. I locked the door of my room, got down on my knees and prayed to Almighty God for victory at Gettysburg. I told Him that this was *His* war, our cause was *His* cause, that we could not stand another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. Then and there I made a solemn vow, that if He would stand by our boys at Gettysburg, *I* would stand by Him. He *did*, and I *will*. I don't know how to explain it, but a sweet peace crept into my soul, and I knew that things would go right at Gettysburg." If Abraham Lincoln had wavered, if he had failed in faith or courage, or prompt decision—the Nation, and not the Army of the Potomac would have lost its great battle.

When asked about General Grant, then

Abraham Lincoln

at Vicksburg, "fighting it out on this line if it takes all summer," the President said:

"Grant is pegging away down there. But I have been praying for Vicksburg also, and I believe our Heavenly Father is going to give us victory there, too."

Though not then known, the victory was already won at Vicksburg.

Abraham Lincoln had the conviction deep in his heart, that the war had become a war for freedom of the slave and was God's own war. With simple abiding faith he asked God's help, and always with that spirit of acceptance that shines with unfading sunlight, in his second Inaugural Address, closing with the words:

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills, that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil, shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with a lash shall be paid with another drawn by a sword—as was said three thousand

The Greatest American

years ago, so still it must be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on, to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan,—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.'"

It is the most sublime State paper of the century, and with the immortal twenty line address at Gettysburg—a modern classic.

THE EMANCIPATION

The Emancipation was not an accident, not of sudden growth. It was evolved from the nature of the man. Abraham Lincoln's first personal knowledge and personal view of a slave sale, was when a very young man, he went to New Orleans, down the Mississippi River with a cargo on a raft of his own construction. With a fellow boatman, he sauntered through the slave market, where Southern planters were gathered at an auction of men, women and children, placed in rows against the wall, for inspection. The auctioneer proclaimed their good qualities as he would those of a horse or mule, saying some were Christians, and therefore valued higher, as they would be more trusty workers. The hammer of the auctioneer fell again and again, dooming the separation of husbands and wives, parents and children, forever. Abraham Lincoln's lips quivered and his voice choked as he said to his com-

The Greatest American

panion—"If I ever get a chance to hit that thing I will hit it hard, by the Eternal God."

Who was *he*, to hit that thing? A boatman, a teamster, a backwoodsman, nothing more. The thing he would hit, was legalized in half the states of the Republic, intrenched in the church and framework of society, a political force recognized in the Constitution. Was there the remotest possibility that *he* would ever be able to smite such an institution? Why did he raise his right hand toward Heaven, and swear that solemn oath? Was it some dim vision of what might come to him through Divine Providence, in the unfolding years? If we believe that God works in unseen ways, then we must believe, that at that moment, there was implanted in the soul of Abraham Lincoln, the spirit and power of God,—waiting God's time for "the clock of destiny to strike the hour of the Nation—the golden moment of the slave." His Cabinet were not ready for Emancipation, declaring it too soon

Abraham Lincoln

and unwise. The country was not ready for this, the most stupendous task ever set by a ruler of people—President, King, or Emperor. When the clock struck the hour—Abraham Lincoln heard it, and was ready. The hand lifted in solemn oath in that slave market, took up the pen of Liberty, and wrote out of existence the American slave market—the American slave—the American slave master. Who shall say, the power that found an outlet in American history, through the personality and pen of Abraham Lincoln, was not the spirit and power of that Eternal God invoked at the slave auction? In the interval between the New Orleans slave market and the White House, during his one term in Congress, he introduced a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. Now, by the stroke of his pen, he swept slavery from the face of the whole country.

On September 22, 1862, Abraham Lincoln announced to his Cabinet, in the following words, his decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation:



Emancipation Monument

The Greatest American

“Gentlemen: I have, as you are aware, thought a great deal about the relation of this war to slavery, and you all remember that several weeks ago I read to you an order that I had prepared upon the subject, which, on account of objections made by some of you, was not issued. Ever since then my mind has been much occupied with this subject, and I have thought all along that the time for acting on it might probably come.

“I think the time has come now. I wish it was a better time. I wish that we were in a better condition. The action of the army against the rebels has not been quite what I should have best liked, but they have been driven out of Maryland, and Pennsylvania is no longer in danger of invasion.

“When the rebel army was at Frederick, I determined, as soon as it should be driven out of Maryland, to issue a proclamation of emancipation, such as I thought most likely to be useful. I said nothing to anyone, but I made a promise

Abraham Lincoln

to myself and—hesitating a little—to my Maker.

“The rebel army is now driven out, and I am going to fulfill that promise. I have called you together to hear what I have written down. I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. This I say without intending anything but respect for any one of you. But I already know the views of each on this question. They have been heretofore expressed, and I have considered them as thoroughly and carefully as I can. What I have written, is that which my reflections have determined me to say. If there is anything in the expressions I use, or in any minor matter which any one of you think had best be changed, I shall be glad to receive your suggestion.

“One other observation I will make. I know very well that many others might, in this matter as in others, do better than I can; and if I was satisfied that the public confidence was more fully possessed by any one of them than by me, and knew of any

The Greatest American

constitutional way in which he could be put in my place, he should have it. I would gladly yield to him. But though I believe I have not so much of the confidence of the people as I had some time since, I do not know that, all things considered, any other person has more; and, however this may be, there is no way in which I can have any other man put where I am. I am here; I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take.”

SUPREMACY OF CHARACTER—TACT

It was not supremacy of official position, but supremacy of character, when he read that Proclamation to the members of his Cabinet, at the same time informing them there would be no discussion, as he had already decided the question, therefore any suggestions would be only in reference to the formal wording of the document. All the members of his Cabinet were men of prominence in public life. The Secretary of State, Wm. H. Seward, had been Governor of New York—the idol of the Empire State. Salmon P. Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, had been Governor of Ohio, and afterward appointed by the President Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. These men had been candidates for President at the Convention nominating Abraham Lincoln—then comparatively unknown beyond the boundaries of the prairies—now

The Greatest American

the man of action—he alone deciding the momentous question of emancipation.

Two days after, on September 24, a great crowd of joyous people gathered at the portico of the White House, and in response to congratulations, the President said:

“What I did, I did after a very full determination, and under a very heavy and solemn sense of responsibility. I can only trust in God I have made no mistake.

“It is now for the country and the world to pass judgment, and, maybe, take action upon it. In my position, I am environed with difficulties. Yet they are scarcely so great as the difficulties of those who, upon the battlefield, are endeavoring to purchase, with their blood and their lives, the future happiness and prosperity of their country. Let us never forget them!”

With his supremacy of character and moral courage, Abraham Lincoln possessed a rare tact and self control that “won out” on many occasions, during the dark

Abraham Lincoln

hours. The day after he arrived in Washington for his inauguration, a so-called Peace Congress was in session, helplessly seeking some way to settle the acute war-like differences between North and South. Delegations had called on President Buchanan with much ceremony, and now called on Abraham Lincoln, with scant courtesy. An unguarded word might be a match to a magazine—the excitement was so intense, so hot with anger over his election—men scowling with criticism, already determined on rebellion. A delegation from New York, Wm. E. Dodge chairman, declared the whole country was anxiously awaiting the inaugural address.

“It is for you, sir, to say whether the Nation shall be plunged into bankruptcy, whether the grass shall grow in the streets of our commercial cities,” said Mr. Dodge.

“Then I say it shall not,” Mr. Lincoln replied, with a merry twinkle in his eye. “If it depends upon me, the grass will not grow anywhere except in the fields and meadows.”

The Greatest American

“And you will yield to the just demands of the South?” asked Mr. Dodge. “You will leave her to control her own institutions? You will admit slave states into the Union on the same conditions as free states? You will not go to war on account of slavery?”

A sad expression passed over Abraham Lincoln's face. “I do not know that I understand your meaning, Mr. Dodge,” he said, without raising his voice. “Nor do I know what my acts or opinions may be in the future, beyond this: If I shall ever come to the great office of President of the United States, I shall take an oath. I shall swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of all the United States, and that I will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. This is a great and solemn duty. With the support and the assistance of Almighty God I shall undertake to perform it. It is not the Constitution as I would like to have it, but as it *is*, that is to be defended. The

Abraham Lincoln

Constitution will not be preserved and defended until enforced and obeyed in every part of every one of the United States. It must be so respected, obeyed, enforced and defended—let the grass grow where it may.”

Silence fell. No one could gainsay the weight and balanced justice of these words, entirely unpremeditated. And the tall, plain man, with never a change in his voice, nor shade of paleness on his face, nor touch of irritation in his tone, was the steady master of himself—master of these men—master of the whole occasion. His splendid self-control had won.

A week later he delivered the Inaugural Address, that the Delegation said, “the whole country was anxiously awaiting.”

The outlook is given in plain, direct, concise language:

“Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences, is either party without faith of being in

The Greatest American

the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on your side of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal—the American people.

“My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you, in hot haste, to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive part, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change it.

“If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there is still no single reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriot-

The Greatest American

ism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust, in the best way, all our present difficulties.

“In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war.

“The government will not assail you; you can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors.

“You can have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government; while I shall have the most solemn one to ‘preserve, protect, and defend’ it.”

With this note of warning, there is in the closing words an appeal for peace, like the pathos of a prayer.

“I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle field and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone all

The Greatest American

over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

The same spirit pervades the remarks to his fellow-citizens at his Springfield home, in the previous November, at a meeting to celebrate his election to the Presidency.

“In all our rejoicings, let us neither express nor cherish any hard feelings toward any citizen who by his vote has differed with us. Let us at all times remember that all American citizens are brothers of a common country, and should dwell together in the bonds of fraternal feeling.”

When the 6th Massachusetts Regiment had been fired upon, April 19, 1861, in Baltimore, the people, in the intense excitement, protested against any more troops passing through the city to Washington or over the “sacred soil” of Maryland. The President said:

“There is no piece of American soil too good to be pressed by the foot of a loyal soldier, on his march to the defense of the Capital of his country.”

Abraham Lincoln

Firmness and patience won, and in a month the reaction showed that self-interest would not permit Baltimore to be an isolated secession outpost. If not quite a Union city, Baltimore ceased to be secessionist.

To Southern members of the Peace Congress, he said:

“My course is as plain as a turnpike road. It is marked out for me by the Constitution. I am in no doubt which way to go.”

The wiser visitors passed out, thoughtful—and seeing more clearly—with some new ideas about the man who bore so well the ordeal of criticism. They saw a self-possessed man, calm and dignified, expressing conviction, distinct and firm purpose. And above all, they saw that strange sadness on the face, as though the misery and sufferings his fellow-citizens were to endure through the coming years, already burdened his soul.

MORAL COURAGE—ORATORY

His extraordinary moral courage was a lever and forceful power in the life of Abraham Lincoln, from his cabin home to the White House. A month after his inauguration, when Secretary Seward plainly intimated in a written paper that *he* would carry out certain policies for the Administration, it was with a gentle courtesy that the President placed Mr. Seward's paper in his desk, and with a wise admonition, indicated that the policies he himself proposed, he would carry out. From that day to the end, he was the head of his official family—the leader—not the follower—the commander of his Administration. It was the finest moral courage, when in time of great emergency, he sent for Edwin M. Stanton, and asked him to be the Secretary of War. Mr. Stanton was a Democrat, and had been a member of President Buchanan's Cabinet. But he knew that Mr. Stanton possessed the un-

Abraham Lincoln

usual qualifications imperative at that time for a successful management of the War Department. With the "Iron Secretary," as Mr. Stanton was termed, the President could be firm, yielding in trifles, but masterful if need be. One day Secretary Stanton said:

"Mr. President, I cannot carry out that order. I don't believe it is wise."

Speaking very gently, the President replied:

"Mr. Secretary, I reckon you will have to carry it out," and it was done.

He treated with silence the suggestion of General McClellan—that the President place himself at the head of civil and military affairs, with a General in command of the army on whom he could rely—presumably McClellan—and thus assume the dictatorship of the Republic. While he asserted for himself every right and authority which the Constitution and the laws conferred upon him, he declined to assume any power not warranted by the title of the office of President; resolute in

The Greatest American

his purpose to perform every duty, and always declaring that the responsibility of preserving the government rested upon the people.

He promptly turned down a similar plan of General Hooker—not in silence—but in a letter that is without a parallel in the records of War, or annals of Peace. After the disastrous battle of Fredericksburg, General Burnside desired the removal of Hooker from the Army of the Potomac. The President did not approve of this, and gave General Hooker the command, at the same time writing him the following letter, dated Jan. 26, 1863:

General—I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course, I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier, which, of course, I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right.

You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during Gen. Burnside's command of the army you have

Abraham Lincoln

taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a dictator.

Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those Generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The Government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders.

I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticising their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it; and now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

In August 1862, Abraham Lincoln's stand for the Union, determined and unalterable—reached high water mark—given to the whole world, in his letter to Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*. Mr. Greeley had addressed an editorial in the *Tribune* to the President, under the heading of—"The Prayer of

The Greatest American

Twenty Millions"—and over his own signature, bitterly criticised the management of the war, and especially what he declared to be a policy of delay in freeing the Southern slaves. The President wrote to Mr. Greeley:

I have just read yours of the 19th, addressed to myself through the *New York Tribune*. If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not, now and here, controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not, now and here, argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

As to the policy I "seem to be pursuing," as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt.

I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the National authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be "the Union as it was." If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them.

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could

Abraham Lincoln

save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.

I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.

This celebrated letter—unique and terse—is dated August 22, 1862, and is the more significant from the fact, that just one month before, on July 22, the Proclamation of Emancipation had been read to the Cabinet, and one month later, September 22, was issued—to take effect January 1, 1863—when “the clock of destiny struck the hour—the golden moment of the slave.”

Abraham Lincoln could not save the Union *with* slavery, and he saved the Union *without* slavery, by a “necessary

The Greatest American

war measure"—emancipation. He said of the Proclamation—

“If it is *not* valid, it needs no retraction. If it *is* valid, it cannot be retracted, any more than the dead can be brought back to life.”

His letter to Horace Greeley did much to steady the loyal sentiment of the country in the very grave emergency. As a matter of fact it was the impractical, impatient, but sincere anti-slavery element to say Amen to “The Prayer of Twenty Millions,” though but a very small part of twenty millions had been demanding immediate emancipation—at any cost—Union or no Union. This small part included a delegation representing all of the religious denominations in Chicago, that went to the White House September 13, a week before the Proclamation was issued, with the belief that to them had been revealed the plan of wisest action to terminate the war. To these good people the President said:

“I hope it will not be irreverent for me

Abraham Lincoln

to say that if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me; for, unless I am more deceived in myself than I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it.

“These are not, however, the days of miracles; and I suppose it will be granted that I am not to expect a direct revelation. I must study the plain physical facts of the case, ascertain what is possible, and learn what appears to be wise and right. Whatever appears to be God’s will, I will do it.”

As time went on, it was clear to all that the self contained Western lawyer was a man of definite purpose, and extraordinary wisdom, and that he was in fact, as well as in name, President of the United States—and more—he won the respect and affection of every member of his Cabinet.

Moral courage was refined gold in Abra-

The Greatest American

ham Lincoln's speeches. In the campaign, two years before his nomination for President, while the Lincoln-Douglass debates were in full swing, the two men spoke on the same day, at Clinton, De Witt County, Illinois. Judge Douglass spoke over three hours at the open air, afternoon meeting, to an immense audience gathered from far and near, crowding on board seats laid across logs. It was one of the most forcible political speeches the "Little Giant" had ever made, and his reference to Mr. Lincoln's Springfield speech a short time before was regarded as very personal. When he closed, there was a great shout for "Lincoln." Finally, Mr. Lincoln stood up on the board, where he had been sitting, and when the crowd saw his tall form, shouts and cheers were wild. When he could make himself heard he said: "This is Judge Douglass's meeting. I have no right, therefore, no disposition to interfere. But if you ladies and gentlemen desire to hear what I have to say on these questions, and will meet me this evening

Abraham Lincoln

at the Courthouse Yard, East Side, I *will try* to answer the gentleman.”

The crowd was even greater in the evening, and Mr. Lincoln’s speech was marvelous for sound, unanswerable argument. Mr. Douglas had charged him with being in favor of negro equality—at that time the bugbear of politics. To this he replied:

“Judge Douglass charges me with being in favor of negro equality, and to the extent that he charges I am not guilty. I *am guilty* of hating servitude and loving freedom; and while I would not carry the equality of the races to the extent charged by my adversary, I am happy to confess before you, that in some things the black man is the equal of the white man.

“In the right to eat the bread—without leave of anybody else—which his own hands earn—*he is my equal—and the equal of Judge Douglas—and the equal of every living man.*”

It was the perfect expression of American statesmanship—as, with the last sen-

The Greatest American

tence he lifted himself to his full height, and raised his hands toward the stars of the still night—the scene was impressive, the cheers tremendous.

In a speech at Columbus, Ohio, in 1859, speaking on the natural rights of the negro, he said:

“I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. There is a physical difference between the two which, in my judgment, will probably forbid their ever living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglass, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position.

“I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that, notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence—the right to life—liberty—and the pursuit of happiness.”

Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln's celebrated speech at Springfield, Illinois, June 17, during the campaign of 1858, sounded the slogan of the Republican party. It was in that speech he declared:

“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot permanently endure, half slave, half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall. But I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in process of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South.”

When a friend said—“Well, Lincoln, that foolish speech will kill you, and defeat you for all offices for all time to come,” referring to the “House Divided” speech, Mr. Lincoln said:

The Greatest American

“If I had to draw a pen across and erase my whole life from existence, and I had one poor gift or choice left, as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech, and leave it to the world unerased.”

Politicians of the West had begged him beforehand, to make this truth softer. He declared that it was God's truth, the time had come for speaking the truth, the people were ready for it. This marvellous, prophetic reading of the people was in large part Abraham Lincoln's wonderful wisdom and strength. He was a study at all times. On the one side, off-hand, approachable, speaking the vocabulary of the people. On the other, a certain dignity, commanding the respect of the highest. A written elegance of speech, always grammatical, his diction was the perfection of plain, simple English.

After the debates with Stephen A. Douglass, New York and the East showed interest and curiosity in the Western lawyer, and Abraham Lincoln was invited to speak

Abraham Lincoln

at Cooper Institute in New York City. William Cullen Bryant presided, and David Dudley Field escorted Mr. Lincoln to the platform. It was the intellect and mental culture, representatives of financial power, lofty character, pre-eminent influence of the metropolis, that made the great audience. , “None finer in the days of Webster and Clay,” the newspapers reported. Many were present from curiosity, to see this new man from the West, who had proved more than the equal of the brilliant Douglass. When Abraham Lincoln had closed his masterly address, there was no feeling of curiosity in the vast audience. It was a feeling of profound respect and admiration, and they asked one another: “What manner of man is this lawyer of the West, who sets forth these great truths as we have never yet heard them before.” It was then and there disclosed and understood—the power of Abraham Lincoln to grasp opinion among the masses—and to make such perfect presentation of it, as caused him to be

The Greatest American

known, not as a follower of opinion—but creator and leader of it.

General Sherman said: “I have seen and heard many of the famous orators of our country, but Abraham Lincoln’s unstudied speeches surpassed all that I ever heard. I have never seen them equalled or even imitated. It was not scholarship, it was not rhetoric, it was not elocution. It was the unaffected and spontaneous eloquence of the heart. He was the purest, the most generous, the most magnanimous of men, and will hold a place in the world’s history loftier than that of any king or conqueror. His work was one of the greatest labors a human intellect ever sustained.”

Goldwin Smith said of the Gettysburg address:

“Not a Sovereign in Europe, however trained from the cradle for state pomps, and however prompted by statesmen and courtiers, could have uttered himself more regally than did Lincoln at Gettysburg.”

TENDER SYMPATHY—JUSTICE AND MERCY

Abraham Lincoln's great heart and tender sympathy daily revealed his sense of justice and mercy, in pardons for soldiers. His Generals complained that it was an interference, and seriously impaired discipline in the army. Sometimes it was a soldier who had gone home to see his family, who was to be shot as a deserter. Sometimes it was a sentinel to be shot for sleeping at his post. But in every instance the man whose life was saved went back to duty, a better soldier.

"It makes me feel rested," the President said, "after a hard day's work, if I can find some good cause for saving a man's life, and I go to bed happy, as I think how joyous the signing of my name will make him, and his family and friends." One little story illustrates many.

William Scott, from a Vermont farm—a private, on a long march—that night

The Greatest American

on picket—the next day another long march, that night again on picket, taking the place of a sick comrade, and then—William Scott was found sleeping on his beat. The fatigue was too much for him. Discipline must be maintained in the army. William Scott was tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be shot. It was at Chain Bridge, a few miles above Washington, where, a prisoner in his tent, he waited for the next morning, to be shot. The tent flaps opened and the President entered. Let Scott tell the story.

“The President was the kindest man I had ever seen. I was scared at first. I had never talked with a great man. But he was so easy and gentle like, asked me all about the people at home, and the farm, and neighbors, and where I went to school, and then about my mother, how she looked, and I showed him her photograph I always had with me. He said how thankful I ought to be that my mother still lived, and that if he were in my place he would try to make her a proud mother

Abraham Lincoln

and never cause her a sorrow or tear. I didn't know why he said so much about my mother—when I was to be shot the next morning. He never said a word about the dreadful next morning; and I braced up, and told him I didn't feel a bit guilty, but only I wished he'd fix it so the firing party wouldn't be from my regiment. That was the hardest of all, to die by the hands of my comrades. Before I could say any more he was standing, and he said: 'My boy, stand up and look me in the face. You are not going to be shot tomorrow. You are going back to your regiment. But this has been a good deal of trouble for me, to come up from Washington, when I am so busy. I want to know how you are going to pay my bill?'

"Well, there was a big lump in my throat, but I managed to say how grateful I was, and in some way I was sure I could pay him. My bounty was in the savings bank, and we could borrow money on mortgage of the farm, and my friends would help, and we could make up five or

The Greatest American

six hundred dollars, anyhow. Then he said:

“ ‘But it is a great deal more than that. My bill is a large one. Your friends cannot pay it, nor your bounty, nor the farm.’ Then he put his hands on my shoulders and said:

“ ‘There is only one man in all the world who can pay it. His name is William Scott. If from this day William Scott does his duty, so that when he comes to die, and I was there, he can look me in the face as he does now and say, I have done my duty as a soldier, then the debt will be paid. Will you make that promise and keep it?’ ”

It was in one of the awful battles of the Peninsula. William Scott was dying. “Boys, I shall never see another battle,” he said. “You all know what you can tell them at home. I have tried to do the right thing. If you ever have the chance, tell the President I have tried to be a good soldier, and true to the flag. Tell him that I have never forgotten his beautiful words

Abraham Lincoln

at Chain Bridge, and if I had lived I should have paid my whole debt. Now that I am dying, I think of his kind face, and thank him because he gave me the chance to fall like a soldier in battle, and not like a coward by the hands of my comrades.”

Was there ever a more Christ-like justice and mercy, more tender, exquisite sympathy, than this revealed in the heart of Abraham Lincoln? Who can doubt a gracious Providence, with that wise, strong hand set to grasp the helm? And Secretary Stanton well said, as he looked on the kindly face in death: “There lies the most perfect ruler of men.”

The same great hearted, tender sympathy is revealed in his letter to the mother bereft of her five sons. An engrossed copy of this fac-simile letter is treasured by Oxford University, England, as a model of pure, expressive English, and elegant diction.

The Greatest American

Executive Mansion
Washington, Nov 21, 1864

To Mrs Birby, Boston, Mass.

Dear Madam:

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to lighten you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully

A. Lincoln.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

During his first year in the White House, in reply to a request for a sketch of his life, Abraham Lincoln said:

“My early history is perfectly characterized by a single line of Gray’s ‘Elegy’: ‘The short and simple annals of the poor.’”

The following autobiography was written by Mr. Lincoln’s own hand, in 1859, in response to the request of a friend, J. W. Fell of Springfield, Illinois. The note sent with the sketch says: “Herewith is a little sketch, as you requested. There is not much of it, for the reason, I suppose, that there is not much of me.”

“I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin Co., Ky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families—second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks, some of whom now reside in Adams Co., and others in Mason Co., Ill. My paternal

The Greatest American

grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham Co., Va., to Kentucky, about 1781 or 1782, where, a year or two later, he was killed by Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. His ancestors, who were Quakers, went to Virginia from Berks Co., Pa. An effort to identify them with the New England family of the same name ended in nothing more definite than a similarity of Christian names in both families, such as Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like.

“My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age, and grew up literally without any education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer Co., Ind., in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so-called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond ‘readin’, writ-

Abraham Lincoln

in', and cipherin', to the rule of three. If a straggler, supposed to understand Latin, happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.

"I was raised to farm work, at which I continued till I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois, and passed the first year in Mason County. Then I got to New Salem, at that time in Sangamon, now Menard County, where I remained a year as a sort of clerk in a store. Then came the Black Hawk War, and I was elected a captain of volunteers—a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went into the campaign, was elected, ran for the Legislature the same year (1832), and was

The Greatest American

beaten—the only time I have ever been beaten by the people. The next and three succeeding biennial elections I was elected to the Legislature. I was not a candidate afterward. During the legislative period I had studied law, and removed to Springfield to practice it. In 1846 I was elected to the Lower House of Congress. Was not a candidate for re-election. From 1849 to 1854, both inclusive, practiced law more assiduously than ever before. Always a Whig in politics, and generally on the Whig electoral ticket, making active canvasses. I was losing interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again. What I have done since then is pretty well known.

“If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said I am in height six feet four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing, on an average, one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and gray eyes—no other marks or brands recollected.

“Yours very truly,

“A. LINCOLN.”

FIRST POLITICAL SPEECH— MISSOURI COMPROMISE

Abraham Lincoln was twenty-three years of age when first a candidate for the Legislature, in 1832. In his first political speech, delivered in Sangamon County, Illinois, he said:

“Gentlemen and fellow-citizens: I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by my friends to become a candidate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet. I am in favor of a national bank. I am in favor of the internal improvement system, and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected, I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same.”

At that time, and many years later, it was the custom in Illinois for candidates to issue handbills giving an outline of the principles advocated, traveling around the country and speaking to the people. The

The Greatest American

following on education, is declared to be the exact words on Mr. Lincoln's first handbill, dated March 9, 1832:

“Upon the subject of education, not promising to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in. That every man may receive at least a moderate education and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object of vital importance even on this account alone; to say nothing of the advantages and satisfaction to be derived from all being able to read the Scriptures and other works, both of a religious and moral nature, for themselves.

“For my part I desire to see the time when education—and by its means, morality, sobriety, enterprise and industry—shall become much more general than at present; and I should be gratified to have it in my power to contribute something to

Abraham Lincoln

the advancement of any measure which might have a tendency to accelerate the happy period.

“Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say, for one, that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow-men. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed. I am young, and unknown to many of you. I was born, and have remained, in the most humble walks of life. I have no wealthy, popular relations or friends, to recommend me. My case is thrown exclusively upon the independent voters of the county; and, if elected, they will have conferred a favor upon me, for which I shall be unremitting in my labors to compensate.

“But, if the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointment to be very much chagrined.”

These principles were also expressed in a speech at New Salem, to a large audience.

The Greatest American

He was defeated in 1832, but elected to the Legislature in 1834, advocating the same principles, and expressing his conviction that—"Universal education should go along with the universal ballot."

His keen, quick sense of the eternal Right and Just, made him the unswerving advocate of equal rights for all men and women. He favored what was then called "Woman's Rights," and often said: "This question is one simply of Time." In 1836, he issued another handbill, naming certain things he desired and advocated. One was in these words, also announced in the *Sangamon Journal*: "I go for *all* sharing the privileges of the Government, who *assist in bearing its burdens*. Consequently, I go for admitting *all* whites to the rights of suffrage, *who pay taxes, or bear arms*, by no means excluding *females*."

It was the Missouri Compromise that stirred to the depths Abraham Lincoln's sense of justice to the negro, and brought forth in the first open determined stand at

Abraham Lincoln

Peoria, Ill., in a speech Oct. 16, 1854—
nearly four years before the Lincoln-Douglass debates.

“Repeal the Missouri Compromise—repeal all compromise—and repeal the Declaration of Independence—repeal all past history—still you cannot repeal human nature.

“The doctrine of self-government is right,—absolutely and eternally right,—but it has no just application as here attempted. Or perhaps I should rather say that whether it has such just application, depends upon whether a negro is *not*, or *is* a man. If he is *not* a man, in that case he who *is* a man, may as a matter of self-government do just what he pleases with him. But if the negro *is* a man, is it not to that extent a total destruction of self-government, to say that he too shall not govern himself? When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself, and also governs another man, that is despotism.

“Little by little, but steadily as man’s

The Greatest American

march to the grave, we have been giving up the old for the new faith. Near eighty years ago, we began by declaring that all men are created equal; but now from that beginning we have run down to the other declaration that for some men to enslave others is a 'sacred right of self-government.' These principles cannot stand together. They are as God and Mammon.

"Our republican robe is soiled and trailed in the dust. Let us purify it. Let us turn and wash it white, in the spirit, if not in the blood, of the Revolution.

"Let us turn slavery from its claims of 'moral right' back upon its existing legal rights, and its arguments of 'necessity.' Let us return it to the position our fathers gave it, and there let it rest in peace.

"Let us re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and the practices and policy which harmonize with it. Let North and South—let all Americans—let all lovers of liberty everywhere, join in the great and good work.

"If we do this, we shall not only have

Abraham Lincoln

saved the Union, but shall have so saved it, as to make and to keep it forever worthy of saving. We shall have so saved it that the succeeding millions of free, happy people, the world over, shall rise up and call us blessed, to the latest generations.”

In his fourth annual message to Congress, December 6, 1864, the President said:

“I repeat the declaration, made a year ago, that while I remain in my present position I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation, nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that Proclamation, or by any of the Acts of Congress.

“If the people should, by whatever mode or means, make it an executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another, and not I, must be their instrument to perform it.

“In stating a single condition of peace, I mean simply to say, that the war will cease on the part of the government, whenever it shall have ceased on the part of those who began it.”

RIGHTS OF THE NEGRO—HIS FREEDOM

That Abraham Lincoln's interest in the slaves grew stronger, as the certainty of their freedom and saving of the Union became assured, is expressed in his own words—to General James S. Wadsworth—also the same year, 1864.

“How to better the condition of the colored race has long been a study which has attracted my serious and careful attention; hence I think I am clear and decided as to what course I shall pursue in the premises, regarding it as a religious duty, as the nation's guardian of these people who have so heroically vindicated their manhood on the battlefield, where, in assisting to save the life of the Republic, they have demonstrated their right to the ballot, which is but the humane protection of the Flag they have so fearlessly defended.”

Abraham Lincoln

When a committee of freed slaves of Baltimore, went to the White House to present a Bible, he said in acceptance:

“I can only say now, as I have often said before, that it has always been a sentiment with me that all mankind should be free. So far as I have been able, or so far as came within my sphere, I have always acted as I believed was right and just, and have done all I could for the good of mankind. I have, in letters and documents sent from this office, expressed myself better than I can now.

“In regard to the Great Book, I have only to say that it is the best gift which God has given men.

“All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book. But for this book we could not know right from wrong. All those things desirable to man are contained in it.”

In August, 1855, Abraham Lincoln, even then, scarcely known away from the Illinois prairies, wrote to Hon. George Robertson of Lexington, Kentucky:

The Greatest American

“So far as peaceful, voluntary emancipation is concerned, the condition of the negro slave in America, scarcely less terrible to the contemplation of a free mind, is now as fixed and hopeless of change for the better, as that of the lost souls of the finally impenitent.

“The Autocrat of all the Russias will resign his crown, and proclaim his subjects free Republicans, sooner than will our American masters voluntarily give up their slaves.

“Our political problem now is—Can we as a nation continue together permanently—forever—half slave and half free? The problem is too mighty for me. May God in His mercy superintend the solution!”

From the White House, in August, 1863, he sent the following letter to General N. P. Banks, with the army, then in Louisiana:

“As an anti-slavery man, I have a motive to desire emancipation which pro-slavery men do not have; but even they have strong reason to thus place them-

Abraham Lincoln

selves again under the shield of the Union, and to thus perpetually hedge against the recurrence of the scenes through which we are now passing. . . . For my own part, I shall not, in any event, retract the Emancipation Proclamation; nor, as Executive, ever return to slavery any person who is freed by the terms of that Proclamation, or by any of the Acts of Congress.”

The dawn had broken. The sun was shining. Less than six months later—on January 11, 1864, another letter went from the White House to Louisiana—glowing with supreme satisfaction—the prophecy of patience, hope, and never wavering faith—fulfilled—in these words to the Governor of Louisiana:

“I congratulate you on having fixed your name in history, as the first Free State Governor of Louisiana. Now you are about to have a convention, which, among other things, will probably define the elective franchise; I barely suggest, for your private consideration, whether some of the colored people may not be let in,

The Greatest American

as, for instance, the very intelligent, and *especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks.*

“They would probably help, in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty in the family of freedom.”

STORY TELLING—RELIEF TO STRESS OF MIND

Abraham Lincoln was not a story teller. But he had the happy faculty of always being ready with an anecdote, or illustration, that was often a relief to the stress of the hour, or embarrassment of the situation.

Emerson said: "It was a rich gift to this wise man. It enabled him to keep his secret; to meet every kind of man and every rank of society; to take off the edge of the severest decisions; to mask his own purpose and sound his companion; to catch the true instinct and temper of every company addressed. And more than all, it is to a man of severe labor, in anxious and exhausting crisis, the natural restorative, and is the protection of the overdriven brain against rancor and insanity."

In 1862, the people of New York City feared bombardment by Confederate cruis-

The Greatest American

ers. A delegation of fifty, rich men, representing in their own right \$100,000,000, went to Washington to see the President about detailing a gunboat to protect the city. Mr. Lincoln was puzzled to know what to say to them, but said he would see them. David Davis, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and life long friend of Mr. Lincoln, presented the delegation. They made an appeal for protection, and said they represented the wealth of New York City—\$100,000,000 in their own right. The President heard them attentively, and then with much courtesy, replied:

“Gentlemen: I am, by the Constitution, Commander-inChief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and as a matter of law I can order anything done that is practicable to be done. But as a matter of fact, I am not in command of the gunboats or ships of war. As a matter of fact, I do not know exactly where they are, but presume they are actively engaged. It is impossible for me in the

Abraham Lincoln

condition of things, to furnish you a gunboat. The credit of the Government is at a very low ebb, greenbacks are not worth more than forty or fifty cents on the dollar. In this condition of things, if I was worth half as much as you gentlemen are represented to be, and as badly frightened as you seem to be, I would build a gunboat and give it to the Government,"

Justice Davis said he never saw \$100,000,000 sink into such insignificant proportions, as it did when that New York delegation left the White House, sadder and probably wiser men.

Just at that time, there were parties interested in cotton which it was difficult to bring up from certain insurrectionary districts, because of the contest between the civil and military authorities, as to the policy of bringing cotton out of the seceded states, permits being issued by the Treasury Department, which were nullified by the military. A party of gentlemen were at Willard's Hotel and were anxious to learn from the President, if

The Greatest American

possible, what would be the probable result of the contest, and requested a friend to broach the subject, on a visit to the White House. After talking with the President for some time on other matters, reference was made to the cotton subject, and he was asked how it would be likely to turn out. The moment the inquiry was made, a smile, amused and bright, lighted up Mr. Lincoln's face, and he said:

“By the way, what has become of our friend, Robert Lewis?”

He was informed that Mr. Lewis was still in his old home in Illinois, and Clerk of the Court, as he had been for many years.

“Well,” said the President, “do you remember a story Bob used to tell about going to Missouri, to look up some Mormon lands belonging to his father?”

Lewis was a warm personal friend of Mr. Lincoln, who told the story that evening, with much enjoyment, and as he only could tell it. The story was in substance as follows:

Abraham Lincoln

“When Bob Lewis became of age, he found among his father’s papers some warrants and patents for lands in North-eastern Missouri, where attempts at Mormon settlement had been made. He thought the best thing he could do would be to look up these lands, see if they were worth anything, and establish his title. It was long before the day of railroads, and Bob started on horseback, equipped with a pair of old saddlebags, in one side of which he packed his papers, and in the other, some necessary articles of the toilet, but which Bob himself had said, made less bulk than his title papers. He travelled a long way round, but finally got into that part of Missouri where he thought he could locate his section of land, and, bringing up before a solitary cabin, hitched his horse, took his saddlebags, and knocked at the door. A gruff, and not hospitable voice bade him enter. The conspicuous objects, perhaps one might say ornaments—were the proprietor, a lean, lanky-looking man, who appeared to

The Greatest American

Bob to be about eleven feet long, stretched before a big fireplace, 'necking' bullets; and above the fireplace hung on a couple of buck's horns was a rifle which also appeared to be about eleven feet long. The man looked up as Bob entered, but made no pause in his busy occupation of preparing bullets. Bob said he was the first to "pass the time of day," and then he inquired about the section of land on which the cabin was located. The proprietor knew nothing about that section, or any other in Missouri; and apparently was indifferent to his visitor's desire for information. Finally Bob got out his papers, looked them over, and said:

" 'Stranger, I am looking up some lands belonging to my father. I've got the titles all right here in these papers,' and he proceeded to prove it by reading the papers aloud. When he had finished, he said: 'Now that is my title to this section. What is yours?'

"The proprietor of the cabin by this time showed a slight interest, stopped his

Abraham Lincoln

work a moment, raised himself on his elbow, and pointing to the rifle, said:

“ ‘Young man, do you see that gun?’

“Mr. Lewis admitted he did, very frankly.

“ ‘Well,’ said the pioneer, ‘that is my title, and if you don’t get out of here pretty quick you will feel the force of it.’

“Bob hurriedly put his papers in his saddlebags, dashed out of the cabin, mounted his pony and galloped down the road, though he declared the proprietor of the cabin snapped his gun twice at him before he turned the corner. But Bob never went back to disturb that man’s title. Now, the military authorities have the same title against the civil authorities that closed out Bob’s title to his Mormon lands in Missouri. The military have the guns. The gentlemen themselves may judge what the result is likely to be.”

LABOR AND CAPITAL— LIBERTY DEFINED

Abraham Lincoln made plain his stand for the rights of labor, in a speech at New Haven, Conn., March 6, 1860, one year before he became President.

“I am glad a system of labor prevails under which laborers can strike when they want to; where they are not obliged to work under *all* circumstances; and are not tied down and obliged to labor whether you pay them for it or not; I like the system which lets a man ‘quit’ when he wants to, and I wish it might prevail everywhere. . . . I do not believe in a law to prevent a man getting rich; that would do more harm than good; so, while we do not propose any war upon capital, we do wish to allow the humblest an equal chance to get rich with everybody else. I want every man to have a chance to better his condition. That is the true system. . . . I am not ashamed to confess that

Abraham Lincoln

25 years ago I was a hired laborer. . . .”

In his first annual message to Congress, December 3, 1861, he deals with this question :

“Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration. Capital has its rights, which are as worthy of protection as any rights, nor is it denied that there is, and probably always will be, a relation between labor and capital, producing mutual benefits.

“The prudent, penniless beginner in the world labors for wages for a while, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself, then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him.

“This is the just, and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way to all, gives hope to all, and consequent energy, and progress, and improvement of

The Greatest American

condition to all. No men living are more worthy to be trusted than those who toil up from poverty—none less inclined to take or touch aught which they have not honestly earned.

“Let them beware of surrendering a political power which they already possess, and which, if surrendered, will surely be used to close the door of advancement against such as they, and to fix new disabilities and burdens upon them, till all of liberty shall be lost.”

To a committee of the Workingmen's Association of New York, in an interview at the White House, March 21, 1864, he said:

“The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one uniting all working people, of all nations, and tongues, and kindreds. Nor should this lead to a war upon property, or the owners of property. Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable; is a positive good to the world. That some should be rich shows that others may

Abraham Lincoln

become rich, and, hence, is just encouragement to energy and enterprise. Let not him who is houseless, pull down the house of another; but let him labor diligently and build one for himself, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built."

A month later he accepted an invitation to speak in Baltimore at a Charity Fair—three years after passing through that city secretly to escape assassination in the plot to take his life. In this address he said:

"The world is in want of a good definition of the word liberty. We all declare ourselves to be for liberty, but we do not all mean the same thing. Some mean that a man can do as he pleases with himself and his property. With others it means that some men can do as they please with other men and other men's labor. Each of these things is called liberty, although they are entirely different. To give an illustration: A shepherd drives the wolf from the throat of his sheep when attacked by him, and the sheep of course thanks

The Greatest American

the shepherd for the protection of his life; but the wolf denounces him as despoiling the sheep of his liberty—especially if it be a black sheep.”

A few days after his second election, in response to a serenade, he declared:

“It has long been a grave question whether any government, not too strong for the liberties of the people, can be strong enough to maintain its existence in great emergencies. But the election . . . has demonstrated that a people’s government can sustain a national election in the midst of a great Civil War. Until now, it has not been known to the world that this was a possibility.”

A proclamation to the Army and Navy, Nov. 15, 1862, sets aside the Sabbath as a day of rest and religious observance:

“The importance for man and beast of the prescribed weekly rest, the sacred rights of Christian soldiers and sailors, a becoming deference to the best sentiments of a Christian people, and a due regard for the Divine will, demand that Sunday

Abraham Lincoln

labor in the Army and Navy be reduced to the measure of strict necessity.

“The discipline and character of the national forces should not suffer, nor the cause they defend be imperilled, by profanation of the name, or the day of the Most High.”

On July 4, 1863, it is the success of the Union Arms—Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and the Mississippi:

“The President announces to the country that news from the army of the Potomac, up to 10 P. M. of the 3d, is such as to cover that army with the highest honor; to promise a great success to the cause of the Union, and to claim the condolence of all for the many gallant fallen; and that for this he especially desires that on this day, He whose will, not ours, should ever be done, be everywhere remembered, and ever revered with profound gratitude.”

THE FATHER OF WATERS AGAIN GOES UNVEXED TO THE SEA

A month later, he wrote to J. C. Conkling, of Springfield, Illinois:

“The signs look better. The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea. Thanks to the great Northwest for it; nor yet wholly to them. Three hundred miles up they met New England, Empire, Keystone, and Jersey, hewing their way right and left. The sunny South, too, in more colors than one, also lent a helping hand. On the spot, their part of the history was jotted down in black and white.

“The job was a great National one, and let no one be slighted who bore an honorable part in it. And while those who cleared the River may well be proud, even that is not all. It is hard to say that anything has been more bravely and well done than at Antietam, Murfreesboro, Gettysburg, and on many fields of less note.”

Abraham Lincoln

With the commission of Lieutenant-General of the Army, he said when presenting it to General Grant, March 9, 1864:

“The nation’s appreciation of what you have done, and its reliance upon you for what remains to be done in the existing great struggle, are now presented with this commission, constituting you Lieutenant-General of the Army of the United States. With this high honor devolves upon you also a corresponding responsibility.

“As the country herein trusts you, so under God, it will sustain you. I scarcely need to add that, with what I here speak for the Nation, goes my own hearty personal concurrence.”

To General Sheridan, he telegraphed October 22, 1864:

“With great pleasure I tender to you and your brave Army, the thanks of the Nation, and my own personal admiration and gratitude, for the month’s operation in the Shenandoah Valley, and especially for the splendid work of October 19, 1864.”

The Greatest American

It was on October 19, that "Old Jubal," as General Sheridan called General Early, retreated from the Shenandoah Valley for good—completely defeated. The President sent the following dispatch to General Sherman in December, 1864:

"When you were about leaving Atlanta for the Atlantic Coast, I was anxious, if not fearful; but feeling that you were the better judge, and remembering that 'nothing risked, nothing gained,' I did not interfere. Now, the undertaking being a success, the honor is all yours; for I believe none of us went further than to acquiesce."

Addressing the 148th Ohio Regiment, in the early part of the war, the President said, with great earnestness:

"It is vain and foolish to arraign this man, or that, for the part he has taken or has not taken, and to hold the Government responsible for his acts. In no administration can there be perfect equality of action, and uniform satisfaction rendered by all.

Abraham Lincoln

“But this Government must be preserved in spite of the acts of any man or set of men. It is worthy your every effort. Nowhere in the world is presented a government of so much liberty and equality. To the humblest and poorest among us are held out the highest privileges and positions. The present moment finds me at the White House; yet there is as good a chance for your children, as there was for my father’s.

“Again I admonish you not to be turned from your stern purpose of defending our beloved country and its free institutions, by any arguments urged by ambitious and designing men, but stand fast to the Union and the old flag.”

Mindful of —“him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphan”—the President wrote to the Postmaster-General:

“Yesterday little endorsements of mine went to you in two cases of postmaster-ships, sought for widows, whose husbands have fallen in the battles of this war.

The Greatest American

These cases, occurring on the same day, brought me to reflect more attentively than I had before done as to what is fairly due from us here in the dispensing of patronage toward the men who, by fighting our battles, bear the chief burden of saving our country.

“My conclusion is that, other claims and qualifications being equal, they have the right, and this is especially applicable to the disabled soldier and the deceased soldier’s family.”

It was in the dark days of financial stress when the credit of the Government was at low ebb, and trying to dispose of the ten-forty bonds. Mr. Jay Cooke had come forward and taken a large amount of the bonds—the only banker, apparently, who at the moment had the patriotism and courage to do it. The bonds proved valuable, and it was soon a fact that it was no risk to take them. Then it was that the other bankers felt reassured, and a dele-

Abraham Lincoln

gation of bankers from New York and other parts of the country came to Washington to see the President about the bonds. They first came to the Secretary of the Treasury, stated they were actuated by patriotic motives to save the credit of the Government, and desired an interview with Mr. Lincoln. The President said he would see the gentlemen, and shortly after they went over to the White House and were shown into the President's room. He looked very tired and worn—sat with his feet stretched out—resting them on the table he used for his desk. He arose at once, stepped forward, and the Secretary presented the bankers, the President shaking hands with each as introduced by name. Then, by way of explaining their business, the Secretary said:

“Mr. President, these gentlemen have come to Washington from patriotic motives—to help us save the credit of the Government. They want to buy our

The Greatest American

bonds; they will put money in the treasury; and, Mr. President, you know, 'where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.' "

Mr. Lincoln drew himself up, standing head and shoulders above all, and with a peculiar smile on his face, replied:

"Yes, Mr. Secretary; but there is another passage of Holy Writ which you may remember—'Where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.' "

To hold the Border States in the Union, a proposition had been made for gradual emancipation, by paying the owners of slaves in these states. A Conference with members of Congress from the Border States was held at the White House. At this Conference the President said: "How much better for you and for your people to take the step which at once shortens the war, and secures substantial compensation for that which is sure to be wholly lost in any other way. How much better to thus

Abraham Lincoln

save the money which else we sink forever in the war! How much better to do it while we can, lest the war ere long renders us peculiarly unable to do it. . How much better for you, as seller, and the Nation as buyer, to sell out and buy out, that without which the war would never have been, than to sink both the thing to be sold and the price of it in cutting one another's throats! I do not speak of emancipation at once but of decision at once to emancipate gradually."

The Chairman of the Committee in Congress, dealing with the proposition, was John Gridley Crisfield, a member of the House of Representatives, from Maryland. The Border States held off, and finally as well known, rejected the proposition. In the meantime the President sent for Mr. Crisfield to come to the White House.

"How are you getting on with that business, Crisfield," he asked, "Have you made your report?"

The Greatest American

Mr. Crisfield replied that the Committee was not ready to report.

“Well, Crisfield,” said the President, “You better get ready pretty soon. Niggers will never be a higher price than they are now.” This was in July, a month before his letter to Horace Greeley, and just two months before he issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

THE LAWYER—FAVORITE HYMN

Abraham Lincoln, it has been said, was a lawyer who “dealt with the deep philosophy of the law—an industrious lawyer—always knew the cases which might be quoted as absolute authority—moved cautiously, and never examined or cross-examined a witness to the detriment of his side—not aggressive in the defence of his doctrines, or opinions—but brave and fearless in the protection of what he believed to be right.” If a witness told the truth he was safe; but woe betide the individual who suppressed or colored the truth. He constructed short sentences of small words—never wearied the mind with the mazes of elaboration—and his speeches to the jury were effective examples of forensic oratory—simple, pure gems of true eloquence. The Circuit practice was in vogue in Illinois—in the early days, and the itinerant lawyer was sure to come with

The Greatest American

the buds of spring or falling leaves of autumn. Among them all, Abraham Lincoln was the star.

Justice David Davis was the Judge of that District, and seemed always willing that Mr. Lincoln should illustrate a point with a story, even if it disturbed the gravity of the Court. The following account of a "celebrated case," was handed down by a life long friend of Mr. Lincoln and one of the two lawyers for the defense; Mr. Lincoln was the lawyer for the prosecution.

It was a suit for slander, in 1854, involving a family quarrel, and was the sensation of what was at that time an obscure little village on the prairies. The two lawyers for the defense appeared and demurred to the declaration, which, to the great annoyance of Mr. Lincoln, the Court sustained. Whatever interest he took in the case before that time, his professional pride was aroused by the fact that the Court had decided that his papers were deficient. Looking across the trial table

Abraham Lincoln

to the defense, and shaking his long finger, he said: "Now, by Jing, I will beat you boys."

"By Jing" was the extent of his expletives, and beyond that he did not go in the expression of his surprise or indignation.

The plaintiff in the case was a native of Tennessee, and a few years before the bringing of the suit had married the sister of the defendant. He was very dark in complexion, but bore no traces of having African blood in his veins beyond his color. The defendant for some reason had fallen out with him and being an ignorant and violent man, circulated the report that he was a "nigger," and in connection with that statement said he had married a white woman. The statute of Illinois made it a crime for a negro to marry a white woman, and because of that, the words were slanderous. These were the words complained of in the declaration, as a lawyer would say.

At the next term of the Court, Mr. Lincoln appeared with his papers amended,

The Greatest American

and fully determined to make good his promise to "beat you boys." None who saw him ever forgot his appearance as he rose to state his case to the jury. He was not excited, but manifested a great earnestness not only because of his client, but he also wanted to redeem himself from the implication arising from the fact that he had been as the lawyers say, "demurred out of Court." Those present long after recalled some of his opening sentences:

"Gentlemen of the Jury: I do not believe that the best way to build and maintain a good reputation is to go to law about it; and during my practice at the Bar it has been my uniform policy to discourage slander suits. But, gentlemen, in this case forbearance has ceased to be a virtue; and this Court room, dedicated to the sacred cause of justice, is the only place where my client can seek protection and vindication. If the malice of the defendant had rested satisfied with speaking the words once, or twice, or even thrice, my client would have borne it in silence;

Abraham Lincoln

but when he went from house to house 'gabbling' about it, then it was that the plaintiff determined to bring this suit."

They said the word "gabbling" as emphasized by Mr. Lincoln, was as splendid in its dramatic effect, as the word "fail" in Richelieu, when uttered by Booth, or Barrett.

In the argument of the case on the testimony, Mr. Lincoln made a most powerful and remarkable speech, abounding in wit, logic, and eloquence of the highest order. His thoughts were clothed in the simplest garb of expression, and understood by every juror in the box. After the instructions were given by the Court, the jury retired, and in a few moments returned with a judgment for the plaintiff for the full amount claimed in the declaration. After the rendition of the verdict, the lawyers for the defense sought Mr. Lincoln and said: "You have beaten us, as you said you would; we want now to ground the weapons of our unequal warfare, and as you have said,

The Greatest American

your client did not want to make money out of the matter, we thought you might get him to remit some of the judgment."

"Well," said Mr. Lincoln, "I will cheerfully advise him to remit on the most favorable terms. The defendant is a fool, but he has worked hard for what he has, and I am not disposed to hold him responsible for that. If every fool was to be dealt with by being held responsible in money, for his folly, the poor-houses of the country would have to be enlarged very much beyond their present capacity."

Upon the suggestion and recommendation of Mr. Lincoln, his client proposed to settle upon the terms of the defendant's paying his fee and costs of the suit, and Mr. Lincoln proposed to leave the amount of his fee to the lawyers of the defendant. They declined to pass upon that question. After a moment Mr. Lincoln said: "Well, gentlemen, don't you think I have honestly earned twenty-five dollars?" The lawyers were very much astonished at the very small fee. One hundred dollars was nearer

Abraham Lincoln

the fee expected, and they expressed themselves not only satisfied but surprised. Considering that the judgment was a large one for those days, that he had attended the case at two terms of Court, that he had been engaged two days in a hotly contested law suit, and that his client's adversary was to pay the bill—the simplicity of his character in money matters is well illustrated, by the fact that for all this he charged twenty-five dollars.

It was in 1859, while Attorney for the Illinois Central Railroad, that in connection with C. H. Moore of the Clinton Bar, Mr. Lincoln attended to the litigation of the Company. He appeared in one case which the Company did not want to try at that term, and remarked to the Court: "We are not ready for trial."

Judge Davis asked: "Why is not the Company ready to go to trial?"

Mr. Lincoln replied: "We are embarrassed by the absence, or rather want of information from Captain McClellan."

"Who is Captain McClellan, and why is he not here?" asked Judge Davis.

The Greatest American

Mr. Lincoln said: "All I know of him is that he is the Engineer of the Railroad, and why he is not here, deponent saith not."

In consequence of Captain McClellan's absence the case was continued. Abraham Lincoln and George B. McClellan had never met up to that time, and the most they knew of each other was, that one was the Attorney and the other the Engineer of the Illinois Central Railroad. In little more than two years from that day the fame of both had spread as wide as civilization, and each held in his grasp the fate of a Nation. The lawyer was directing Councils and Cabinets, and the engineer, subordinate to the lawyer as Commander-in-Chief, was directing armies greater than the combined forces of Wellington and Napoleon, at Waterloo.

In the same year, during a term of Court, an incident brought out Abraham Lincoln's favorite Hymn—"Mortality"—so widely known by the first line—"Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud!"

Abraham Lincoln

The story was told by his life long friend, the late Judge Lawrance Weldon, whose affection and loyalty for Mr. Lincoln made him happy when relating incidents of their early friendship and legal association on the Illinois prairies.

“The Court was held at the little Village of Lincoln, named for him. Judge David Davis and all the lawyers stopped at the not spacious Hotel—or as we said in pioneer days—“put up at the tavern.” There was a very big room, with four beds, called the “lawyers’ room.” Some of us thin fellows doubled up; but Judge Davis, who was as large then as afterward, when a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, always had a bed to himself. Mr. Lincoln was an early riser, and one morning, when up early as usual and dressed, he sat before the big old fashioned fireplace, and repeated aloud from memory that whole Hymn—fourteen verses. Somebody asked him for the name of the Author; he said he had never been able to learn who wrote it, but wished he knew.

The Greatest American

Nobody in the room could tell; but I know that I, and I will venture to say that all the rest, soon after looked it up—so impressed were all by its beauty, when he repeated it that morning. I remember there were many guesses about the author, and some said Shakespeare must have written it. Mr. Lincoln, who was better read in Shakespeare than any of us, said they were not Shakespeare's words. I made a persistent hunt for the name of the author, and years after found the Hymn was written by William Knox, an Englishman, who was born in 1789, and died in 1825.

“I have always felt that the Hymn would not have been quite the same had anybody but Abraham Lincoln spoken the words. The Hymn seemed to fit the man. How long ago it was! But I see him now, sitting before the big fireplace. It comes back to me, as if only yesterday—that sadness even then on his face—the strange forceful gentleness we all felt, but did not understand.”

Abraham Lincoln

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud!
Like a fast-flitting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
He passes from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around and together be laid;
And the young and the old, and the low and the
high,
Shall moulder to dust and together shall lie.

The child that a mother attended and loved,
The mother that infant's affection that proved,
The husband that mother and infant that blessed,
Each, all, are away to their dwelling of rest.

The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in
whose eye,
Shone beauty and pleasure—her triumphs are by;
And the memory of those that beloved her and
praised,
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

The hand of the King that the sceptre hath borne,
The brow of the priest that the mitre hath worn,
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,
Are hidden and lost in the depth of the grave.

The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap,
The herdsman who climbed with his goats to the
steep,
The beggar that wandered in search of his bread,
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint that enjoyed the communion of heaven,
The sinner that dared to remain unforgiven,
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.

The Greatest American

So the multitude goes, like the flower and the
weed,
That wither away to let others succeed;
So the multitude comes, even those we behold,
To repeat every tale that hath often been told.

For we are the same that our fathers have been;
We see the same sights that our fathers have
seen,
We drink the same stream, and we feel the same
sun,
And we run the same course that our fathers
have run.

The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would
think;
From the death we are shrinking they, too, would
shrink;
To the life we are clinging to, they, too would
cling;
But it speeds from the earth like a bird on the
wing.

They loved, but their story we cannot unfold;
They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is
cold;
They grieved, but no wail from their slumbers
may come;
They joyed, but the voice of their gladness is
dumb.

They died—ay! they died; and we things that
are now,
Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,
Who make in their dwelling a transient abode,
Meet the changes they met on their pilgrimage
road.

Abraham Lincoln

Yea! hope and despondency, pleasure and pain,
Are mingled together like sunshine and rain;
And the smile and the tear and the song and the
dirge
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a
breath,
From the blossom of health to the paleness of
death,
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the
shroud—
Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

CITY POINT—LAST DAYS— HISTORY

Forty-four years ago Abraham Lincoln died by the hand of an assassin. Five days before, on Sunday, April 9, the war ended with the surrender of the armies of Northern Virginia. That Sunday evening the President returned to Washington from City Point, where he had gone two weeks before. Ostensibly, his trip was one of recreation and rest from the cares and anxieties with which he was overwhelmed, and with the terrible strain of the four years, had worn out even his rugged strength. Apparently it was a sudden impulse on the part of the President. No preparations were made beforehand, and nothing was known at the White House of the intended trip until a few hours before he started.

About noon on March 23 the President sent for one of the four men detailed as his personal guard, to come to his office.

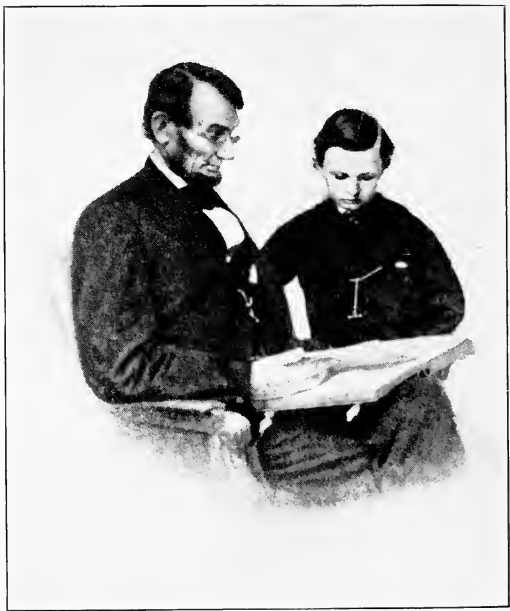
Abraham Lincoln

When the man answered the summons he found the President seated at his desk, in the center of the room.

“Crook, I am going to City Point to-night. I want you to go with me. Make your preparations at once, and meet me at the boat.”

This was the brief announcement, but the words were followed by a deep sigh, and the man observed that the President’s sad face had more than its usual weary, troubled expression.

At five o’clock the River Queen, commanded by Captain Bradford, left the Seventh Street wharf for City Point, with the President, Mrs. Lincoln and maid, Tad Lincoln, William Crook, and a man servant, on board. During the journey down the river the President’s depressed, abstracted manner was very marked, and afterwards frequently recalled by Crook, long since the only survivor of the little party. The President seemed weighed down by a burden heavier than the gloom of War and his daily responsibilities. Now



The President and Tad

The Greatest American

and then, by a giant effort, he would shake off the depression with some bit of quaint humor in a characteristic anecdote, or more readily enter into Tad's boyish amusements.

Tad Lincoln was at that time about twelve years of age. He was a handsome boy, impulsive and winning. His devotion to his father was outspoken, and it was returned twofold by the President, who never denied the boy a single wish. At the White House there was no restraint or concealment of the mutual affection. Tad would often bound into his father's arms, and the President would caress and carry him about like a baby. Not infrequently the President was made the victim of Tad's boyish pranks, but he enjoyed the fun all the more when the "joke" was on himself.

The President's life was full of anxieties and sorrows of the hour, and the boy's sweetness and cheery ways were like sunshine through the clouds. Harassed and distressed by daily cares, he found rest and pleasure in Tad's youthful spirits

Abraham Lincoln

and society. The President once said: "When all the world seems hard, I still have Tad." An impediment in the boy's speech gave special tenderness to the President's love for him. Tad had things pretty much his own way in the private part of the White House. His little bed was in the President's chamber, and there he slept within reach of his father's hand. Just across the hall a large room had been given up for his exclusive use. This was his play room, or "theater" as he liked to call it. The attendants about the White House were the boy's loyal subjects. If he was autocratic and exacting, he was irresistibly sweet and generous, and the men enjoyed his youthful tyranny. They put up the "scenery" for his "theater" and he often persuaded some of the soldiers stationed in the grounds, when off duty, to come in and play "show" with him. He was proud of his own uniform and cared but little for his "civil clothes." Though a general favorite with strangers and so greatly indulged by his parents,

The Greatest American

the boy was singularly unspoiled. Young as he was he possessed the traits which made him companionable to his elders. In one respect alone, Tad resembled his father. When his face was in repose, his large, dreamy gray eyes showed the same sad expression always seen in the President's eyes. He was named Thomas, for his Grandfather Lincoln. But his father was responsible for the pet name of Tad, which clung to him through all his short life. Whenever it was possible for Tad to go anywhere with his father he was never denied the pleasure. On this trip down the river he was the life and brightness of the party. He at once made friends with the sailors, and was allowed the freedom of the boat, just as he had his way everywhere. There was no part of the steamer that he did not explore, whether it was at the heels of the engineer, or "playing pilot" in the pilot house. Tad looked forward with childish delight to going to the front, where there was "real war," of which he had heard so much. The trip

Abraham Lincoln

was a red letter day in the boy's life, and one of the few happy days he was destined to enjoy with his idolized father.

While at City Point the party lived on the boat. The President and General Grant were in frequent consultation, often in morning walks on the deck of the *River Queen*. Mr. Lincoln's tall, angular form seemed taller, and more angular by contrast with the short, compact figure of General Grant, who was invariably smoking his cigar.

Their personal acquaintance had been slight, but from the first there was a perfect confidence, mutual sympathy, and harmony of plans. Their first meeting was about a year before, when General Grant went to the White House, March 9, 1864, to receive from the President's hand, his commission as Lieutenant-General of the Armies of the United States. The year before that, July 13, 1863, the President wrote the following to General Grant:

"I do not remember that you and I ever met personally. I write this now as a

The Greatest American

grateful acknowledgment for the almost inestimable service you have done the country.

“I write to say a word further. When you first reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, I thought you should do what you finally did—march the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports, and thus go below; and I never had any faith, except a general hope, that you knew better than I, that the Yazoo Pass expedition, and the like, could succeed. When you got below and took Port Gibson, Grand Gulf and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join General Banks; and when you turned northward, east of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake.

“I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right, and I was wrong.”

The memorable council of the President, General Grant, General Sherman and Admiral Porter, on board the River Queen March 27, followed in quick succession by the advance of the Union

Abraham Lincoln

forces, the fall of Petersburg, the evacuation of Richmond, the retreat and surrender of General Lee, are all matters of history. The review of the troops by the President on the day after his arrival, is not without personal interest and incident. The review was about three miles from City Point, on the road to Petersburg, where a few days later the Confederate lines were surrounded by the Union Army. The President rode out with General Grant and Staff to the headquarters of General Meade. He was mounted on the small black horse "Jeff Davis" captured from the enemy, and said to have been Mrs. Davis' saddle horse. Mr. Lincoln's tall form rose high above the pony's back—his feet almost touched the ground, and his whole appearance was ludicrous and amused the soldiers. Tad was mounted and in care of Crook. The lad rode with fearless courage and was full of childish excitement at the prospect of seeing so many soldiers. The review proved to be more than the mere display of marching

The Greatest American

men. The skirmishing along the lines, and bursting shells dangerously near, caused a feeling of anxiety for the President's safety, and before it was over, General Grant gave the signal to leave the grounds. But through it all, no soldier in the ranks was cooler and braver under fire than Tad Lincoln.

A little excursion up the Appomattox River made the single diversion and social feature of the President's stay at City Point. It was on Sunday afternoon, one week before the surrender. The company included the President, General Grant and staff, Admiral Porter, Mrs. Lincoln, Mrs. Grant, Fred Grant, then a lad of sixteen, Tad Lincoln and Crook. The party went up on the small headquarter boat, landed at Point of Rocks, and went over to the "Crow's Nest." The chief attraction here was a magnificent English Oak, whose story was told the visitors by a group of natives. Pocahontas had saved the life of Captain John Smith under this tree. The legend, therefore, had saved the tree while

Abraham Lincoln

all its companions had fallen by the woodman's axe. When the black people were told that the tall man was really "Massa Linkum" they gazed at the President with open-eyed wonder and reverent curiosity. The day was full of sunshine, and here the desolation and horrors of war could not spread their pall over Nature's gladness, bursting forth in the first buds of the early Spring. The banks of the Appomattox were a shimmer of green, and gorgeous color of wild flowers, and the branches of the dogwood threw the fragrance of its white blossoms over the passing boat. It was almost a pleasure trip, and the one peaceful day of the President's visit, holding the nearest approach to forgetfulness of the war.

The next morning a rough looking man in citizen's dress suddenly appeared on board of the River Queen, and going to Captain Bradford, asked to see the President. His clothes were dusty and travel worn, and his whole appearance indicated that he had made a long journey on foot.

The Greatest American

He showed signs of great fatigue and repressed excitement. When told he must state his business with the President, he became nervous and impatient. He said he was from Illinois, and had come a long way to see Mr. Lincoln. "The President knew my father out there, and I did him a service once," he added, giving a name which he declared was well known to Mr. Lincoln.

Captain Bradford was not prepossessed in the man's favor, but he referred him to Crook, who carried his message to the President.

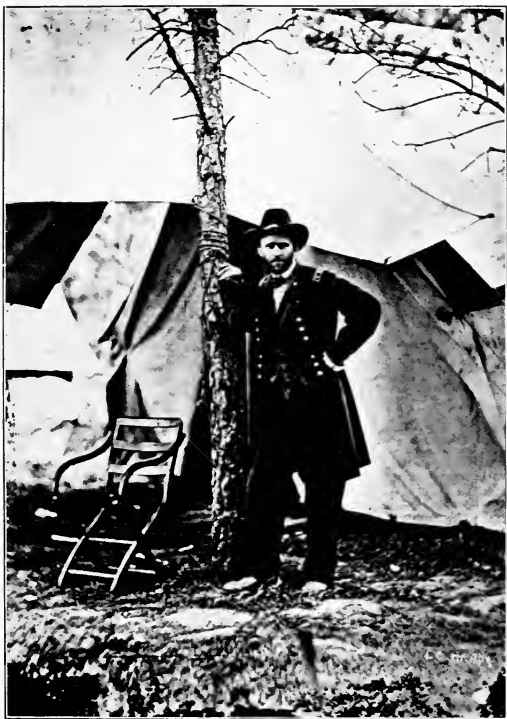
"I don't know such a man and never knew him. No, Crook, I can't see him," was Mr. Lincoln's reply. When this answer was taken to the would-be visitor, he grew more nervous and excited. He insisted, and begged Crook to try again and to urge the President to see him, repeating very earnestly that it was a matter of great importance. When Crook went to the President a second time the latter seemed much disturbed and firmly

Abraham Lincoln

refused to see the man. His refusal was again carried back, and now the man's disappointment showed itself in desperate, reckless anger, as he said fiercely: "If I could see him he'd know me d——d quick!" With these words he turned and instantly left the boat.

Recovering from the surprise caused by this unexpected turn, Capt. Bradford at once made search for the stranger, who was not to be found. No one had seen him go on or off the boat, and, though the search was continued and thorough, there was no trace of him anywhere in the vicinity. Added precautions for the President's safety were taken by the Captain. Crook, who was always armed, was doubly watchful, but Mr. Lincoln himself was not aware of it. Had the man succeeded in reaching the President, there is little doubt that the River Queen would have been the scene of the assassination instead of Ford's Theater.

On March 29, General Grant moved his headquarters from City Point, in accord-



Gen. Grant, at Headquarters, City Point, 1865

The Greatest American

ance with the forward movement of the Army and the attack to be made on Petersburg the following night. On the evening before, the President said: "General, if you leave tomorrow, I think I will return to Washington."

"Better stay a few days longer, Mr. President. You are protected by my troops. You know this is my base of supplies, and you can be comfortable here living on the boat," replied General Grant. Then with a quiet smile on his face he added: "Why not stay a few days longer, and—visit Richmond?" He said this as coolly and with the same confidence in the tone of his voice as if speaking of visiting any city on some ordinary sight-seeing trip. The President looked up in quick surprise, his face full of serious interest, but seeing the smile on General Grant's face, asked in a light tone: "How long do you think I will have to stay to do that, General?"

"Oh, a few days—perhaps a week—but not longer, I think. I hope you will stay,

Abraham Lincoln

Mr. President," answered General Grant, as he gave two or three puffs at his cigar.

"Well, if I can visit Richmond within a week, I will remain. I guess they can get along without me in Washington a week longer. The most of the work seems to be down this way just now, anyhow," replied the President with a touch of dry humor, and settling back in his chair, as if relieved by the decision to stay. They were at the Headquarters and several Staff Officers present recalled this half jesting conversation a few days later, and referred to General Grant's words as, "the old man's prophecy."

Five days later the Stars and Stripes floated over Richmond, and the following day the President visited the Confederate Capital. It was from a little girl he received the first token of peace. She was younger than Tad, and came in with a bunch of flowers in her hand. In a shy way the child looked from one to another without speaking. Then she looked up at the President with a wistful, half timid

The Greatest American

gaze, and, meeting his answering smile, stepped forward and placed the flowers in his hand. She had unconsciously chosen white flowers, emblematical of that peace which was soon to bless the land. Every one felt the sweetness of the little girl's welcome, and the President, who was much touched by it, putting his hand gently on her head, bent down and kissed her. Then, turning to the officers, as his sad face grew bright for the moment, he said: "This is the first token of peace, and a sincere one, too."

When the colored people followed him along the streets, dropping on their knees, he said:

"Don't kneel to me—that is not right. You must kneel to God only, and thank Him for the liberty you will hereafter enjoy. I am but God's humble instrument; but you may rest assured that as long as I live no one shall put a shackle on your limbs, and you shall have all the rights which God has given to every other free citizen of this Republic."

Abraham Lincoln

On Saturday, the day fixed for his return to Washington, the President visited the hospitals at City Point, shaking hands with several thousand soldiers. His presence caused much enthusiasm, the certainty of General Lee's surrender having already had its cheering effect. In a little speech he said:

“I have come to see the boys who have fought the battles of the country, and particularly the battles which resulted in the evacuation of Richmond. I desire to take these men by the hand, as it will probably be my last opportunity of meeting them.”

That evening crowds gathered at the wharf to see the President off, and the River Queen moved out while the bands played, soldiers cheered and flags were flying. Mr. Lincoln stood on the deck, bowing and smiling his good bye, and the women waved their handkerchiefs till City Point was lost to sight in the darkness. The President was in good spirits. Such glorious results had been achieved during his two weeks at the front that, despite

The Greatest American

the anxiety and tremendous strain upon him, he was going back to Washington rested by the change. His humor showed itself in several amusing stories, told in his happiest vein. The next day, as the party sat on deck, the leaders of the rebellion were discussed and the probabilities of Jefferson Davis's capture led to the question whether he could, after all, be tried for treason.

“Well,” said Mr. Lincoln, settling back in his chair and looking smilingly out upon the water: “That reminds me of the boy and the coon I once saw in Illinois. I was going down to my office one morning when I saw a boy sitting on the sidewalk just outside of a gate. He had a small coon, which he held by a rope round its neck. The boy was crying, and I of course stopped and asked what was the matter. ‘Mister,’ he answered, wiping the tears off with his sleeve, ‘do you see that coon there?’ I said I did. ‘Well, Mister, do you see that rope?’ he asked. Again I replied in the affirmative, when he

Abraham Lincoln

said, still sobbing: 'Now, Mister, that coon has been gnawing that rope to get away. I've been watching him all the morning, and Mister, I'm dogged if I don't wish the rascal would just gnaw through and go.' "

Tad, who was sitting by his father, asked with eager interest: "Oh, father, why didn't he put a chain on the coon? A chain would hold a coon."

"Well, Tad," replied the President, "I guess the boy hadn't any chain." Then, turning to the laughing group before him, he added: "Now, it's a question whether we have a law that would hold Jefferson Davis. If we haven't, it would be less trouble to just let him gnaw through and go."

The President arrived in Washington at six o'clock Sunday evening, and found at the White House a dispatch from General Grant telling him of the surrender that day. The news had already gone out from the War Department, and the city was trembling with joyous excitement.

The Greatest American

On Monday morning, all business was suspended, and before noon the rejoicing reached the highest pitch of enthusiasm all over the city, as it did throughout the North wherever the wires had flashed the report. Clerks left their desks in the various Government departments by common consent, and gathered in front of the White House, where they sang "Old Hundred" and "The Star Spangled Banner." Then going over to the War Department Building they sang "Rally Round the Flag" till Secretary Stanton appeared bringing out General Halleck to make a speech. Mr. Stanton had, at 10 o'clock the night before, issued an order for the firing of salutes at all army headquarters, departments, and the Military Academy at West Point.

As the crowd increased at the White House a band of music was added. The President came out on the portico and made some remarks, saying he would reserve his speech till the evening fixed for a formal celebration. Then in a facetious tone he said: "I see you have a band of

Abraham Lincoln

music with you. I have always thought that 'Dixie' was one of the best tunes I ever heard. Our adversaries over the way I know, have attempted to appropriate it. But I insist that yesterday we fairly captured it. I referred the question to the Attorney General, and he gave it as his legal opinion that it is now our property. I ask the band to play 'Dixie' this morning." The band at once struck up "Dixie" amid the laughter and cheers of the people.

On Friday morning Robert Lincoln arrived from City Point, and went directly home to the White House, where he took breakfast with his father. The President wished his son to adopt the profession of law and that morning talked with him on plans for his future. Robert Lincoln had gone as a Captain, on General Grant's staff, immediately after graduating from Harvard, and it was just before starting for the Front, that he met for the first time Miss Mary Harlan, who was spending her school vacation with her parents, at the National Hotel, in Washington.

The Greatest American

Whether it was a case of love at first sight with the young officer and the lovely daughter of Senator Harlan or not, it is certain that Mrs. Lincoln soon discovered her son's preference, and was so much pleased, that she not only encouraged the course of true love to run smoothly, but set her heart upon making Miss Harlan her son's wife. And in all the changes of after years, Mrs. Lincoln never changed toward her daughter-in-law, for whom she held as long as she lived, a constant and sincere affection.

During the conversation with his son that Good Friday morning, the President talked of the war and the events of the surrender, as related by Captain Lincoln. A photograph of General Lee happened to lie on a table near, and the President seeing this, took it up and studying the face for a moment, said earnestly:

"Yes, that is a fine face. There can be no mistake in that face. It indicates the character of the man."

This was the last conversation Robert

Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln had with his father. All that day the President was occupied with crowds of visitors till the hour of the Cabinet meeting and they did not meet again till in the evening at dinner. At this Cabinet meeting, the last held by Mr. Lincoln, all the members were present except Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State, who had a few days before been thrown from his carriage and severely injured. General Grant was present sitting in Mr. Seward's chair, and the others around the table were, Secretary of War, Stanton; Secretary of the Navy, Welles; Secretary of the Treasury, McCulloch; Attorney General Speed; Secretary of the Interior, Otto; and Postmaster-General, Randall. In discussing the surrender, the President referred most kindly to General Lee, whose example he believed would have a good influence throughout the South. General Grant also expressed this opinion, and said he felt sure that the surrender of all armed forces in the Southern States would quickly follow. The President was in the

The Greatest American

best of spirits, and talked in a bright, hopeful tone of plans for reconstructing the rebellious States. He proposed no harsh measures and no retaliatory steps as punishment for the South, where impoverished, desolated homes, and exhausted industries were already a terrible retribution. His nature was so singularly free from all vindictiveness, and so magnanimous in its charity, that he thought only of restoring to the country a united people and an undivided government. The terms of surrender proposed by General Grant had been known to the President beforehand, but at this Cabinet meeting they were cordially approved by the President's advisers without a dissenting voice, the Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, readily indorsing General Grant's wise action, in making the terms both liberal and just.

The President was not inclined to go to the theater that evening, but went to please Mrs. Lincoln, who had invited a party, including General and Mrs. Grant, and had engaged a box. Feeling very anxi-

Abraham Lincoln

ous to see their children, at school in New Jersey, they went away on the evening train, instead of waiting till morning as at first intended. When the family met at dinner, the President expressed much regret, and said the people would be greatly disappointed not to see General Grant. Mrs. Lincoln remarking: "They will be doubly disappointed then, if you do not go," the President smiled and answered: "Well, perhaps I'd better go. But I am not so much of a stranger to the people here as General Grant, and not so much of a hero, either."

Before starting to the theater, the President, as had been his custom every evening after dinner, walked over to the War Department, where he often remained with Secretary Stanton till a late hour. His escort at such times was a single attendant, one of his guard, and on this evening Crook escorted him. He had frequently spoken of the possibility of being killed, always calmly as if that was something he expected, but never exhibiting fear or a

The Greatest American

desire to protect himself. The shadow was over him from the time he became President, in the conviction that some time, before leaving the White House, he would be assassinated. When walking back that evening, Mr. Lincoln referred to this, remarking: "But I have confidence in those around me to believe the assassin would not escape with his life."

Mr. Colfax, Speaker of the House of Representatives, was in the Red Room waiting to see the President, and he remained until Mrs. Lincoln joined them, ready for the theater. Mr. Colfax went out at the same time, and in crossing the vestibule the President again referred to General Grant, and said he was sorry to have the people disappointed by the General's absence from the theater. Mr. Colfax bade the President and Mrs. Lincoln good-night on the portico, and Pendel closed the door of the carriage which bore them away to the theater. Two hours later the sound of the door bell rang through the White House, and Pendel opened the door. The

Abraham Lincoln

Sergeant of the Guard stood before him, pale and excited, as he exclaimed: "The President has been shot at the theater!" Pendel fell back a step as if struck, and then, slowly shutting the door, went up stairs where he found Colonel Hay, the President's Secretary, to whom he told what the soldier had said. Colonel Hay at once directed the attendants to keep the House closed and to admit no one. Immediately after, he went into Robert Lincoln's room, broke the terrible news, and in a few moments they started together for the theater. Tad, crying and sobbing, was carried to his room by Pendel, who held him in his arms till late in the night, trying to comfort him, but with no faith in his own words, repeated like a lesson, till the boy had sobbed himself to sleep. At day-break, Tad was taken to the house where the President lay dying, and where he saw his mother and brother at the bedside, stunned with grief. But his tears seemed to have all flowed in his first burst of sorrow the night before, and

The Greatest American

now white, unnaturally calm, and with dry eyes he gazed on his father's face.

A year after the death of the President, Mrs. Lincoln and Tad went abroad, remaining three years, where he was at school in Germany. When they returned, he was a handsome boy of sixteen, unchanged in his sweet affectionate disposition, and retaining those traits which had made him so attractive when a little boy. But the old buoyancy of spirits was gone, and the bright impulsive happy heartedness which had been the daily sunshine about the President, was now but an occasional gleam. Those who watched this growing sadness in Tad's character felt that the light of his young life went out when his father died. The next two years were spent with his mother in Illinois, the greater part of the time in Chicago, where they lived at the Clifton House. Here he contracted a severe cold, which resulted in pneumonia, and after a brief illness, Tad Lincoln died at the age of eighteen. He sleeps by the side of his

Abraham Lincoln

father and brother Willie, in the Cemetary at Springfield, and where, not long after, his mother was laid to rest.

Of the four men detailed to guard the President, Crook and Pendel remain in continuous service at the White House. They date their appointments from November, 1864. Pendel* is a plain man, but not without the sentiment of holding some memento of the President, as his most precious treasure. Among them is a locket with a little ring of the President's hair, and his appointment with the President's name. Crook treasures the inkstand and chair, used by the President, and notes of his diary, kept on his visit with the President, at City Point.

Abraham's Lincoln's last spoken words in public were on Tuesday evening, the second day after his return from City Point, when the people of Monday evening again gathered at the portico of the

*Thomas Pendel's service of nearly forty-five years closed with his life, five days after the inauguration of President Taft, where he died respected and beloved by his friends and neighbors, and honored by his associates at the White House.

The Greatest American

White House. The note of sadness is prophetic of the "promised land he may not enter in."

"We meet this evening not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart.

"The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, and the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give hope of a righteous and speedy peace, whose joyous expression cannot be restrained.

"In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow, must not be forgotten. Nor must those whose harder part give us the cause of rejoicing, be overlooked; their honors must not be parceled out with others.

"I myself was near the front, and had the high pleasure of transmitting the good news to you; but no part of the honor, for plan or execution, is mine. To General Grant, his skillful officers and brave men, all belongs."

To what intellectual niche has the impartial verdict of forty-four years assigned Abraham Lincoln? The only just

Abraham Lincoln

scale by which to measure any man is the scale of actual achievement. The first count in the measurement of Abraham Lincoln is this: With a calm, sublime reliance on God and the everlasting principles of Right, he guided an immense nation through the most stupendous Civil War ever waged, and never made a mistake. His emancipation of the slave was the greatest step—most vital in the life of the nation—ever taken by a President of the United States. It will go into history as a deed worthy of the Master.

Since his tragic death, many famous reputations have waned or entirely disappeared. But Abraham Lincoln's looms larger every day. There is no record in the world's history of such a startling elevation from obscurity. A Corsican Lieutenant of Artillery once presided over a Congress of Conquered Kings. Napoleon's head grew dizzy. Abraham Lincoln's head grew more serene and clear and majestically poised, the higher he rose. His public life had covered little more than ten

The Greatest American

years. A country lawyer in circuit practice—not known out of his own state. At twenty-five, elected to the legislature; ten years later, two years in Congress; another ten years—and then—waging the most protracted and brilliant debate with Stephen A. Douglass, ever known in the politics of the country, more than a match for the “Little Giant’s” intellect, oratory and experience, at one bound achieving National recognition and reputation; two years more, nominated and elected to the highest office in the gift of the nation. This unknown, self educated man of the prairies, is borne to the White House by the great popular voice of the people, and there he felt the throb of the people’s hearts, every hour.

For forty years and more, the story has been written and re-written, in hundreds of forms, and yet it is ever new in interest and undimmed in glory. Of the people as he was, from birth to death, Abraham Lincoln often said: “I do not lead, I only follow.” It was the genius, such

Abraham Lincoln

as given to few men in this world—the genius of leadership. His lowly birth and early hardships were blessings in disguise. His homely jests contained more wisdom than many philosophic orations. Underneath his rustic manners he possessed the most delicate instincts of the gentleman.

Thirty years after the death of Abraham Lincoln, more had been written and spoken of him than ever written and spoken of any other American in the same period of time. In the past forty years, the name, career and fame of Abraham Lincoln have filled volumes of writings equal in magnitude to all that has been written of either Washington or Franklin, during more than a century. The distinguished services of Washington and public life of Franklin covered the larger part of half a century. Abraham Lincoln's official or public life was included in ten years. Among American statesmen he is conspicuously alone, separated from Washington and Grant, by their military service. On the statesmanship side of

The Greatest American

his career, there is no one from Washington down the whole line to be compared with Abraham Lincoln—President of the People—nearest the people—best loved of the people. The emancipated slave reveres the memory of the man who gave him freedom. Shall we not cherish his memory in our homes—North and South, all over this broad land;—and mark a Lincoln day in our schools? The day of his birth was the most auspicious of all the days, that have blessed us as a Nation.

LINCOLN WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY

“I am not much of a judge of religion, but in my opinion, the religion that sets men to fight and rebel against this government, because, as they think, the government does not sufficiently help some men to eat their bread on the sweat of other men’s faces, is not the sort of religion upon which people can get to Heaven.”

“I do not impugn the motives of any one opposed to me. It is no pleasure to me to triumph over any one; but I give thanks to the Almighty for the evidence of the people’s resolution to stand by free government and the rights of humanity.”

Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them. To deny it, however, in this case, is to deny that there is a God governing the world.

“I do the very best I know how, the very

The Greatest American

best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels, swearing I was right, would make no difference."

If it were not for my firm belief in an over-ruling Providence, it would be difficult for me, in the midst of such complications of affairs, to keep my reason in its seat. But I am confident that the Almighty has his plans and will work them out; and whether we see it or not, they will be the wisest and best for us.

"No, gentlemen; I have not asked the nomination, and I will not now buy it with pledges. If I am nominated and elected, I shall not go into the Presidency as the tool of this man or that man, or as the property of any factor or clique."

"I am in a certain sense, made the standard-bearer in behalf of the Republicans. I was made so merely because there had to be some one so placed, I being no wise preferable to any other one of the twenty-

Abraham Lincoln

five—perhaps a hundred—we have in the Republican ranks.”

“If the war continues long, as it must if the object be not sooner attained, the institution in your States will be extinguished by mere friction and abrasion—by the mere incidents of war. It will be gone, and you will have nothing valuable in lieu of it. Much of its value is gone already.”

We grow in this direction daily, and I am not without hope that some great thing is to be accomplished. When the hour comes for dealing with slavery, I trust I shall be willing to act though it costs my life; and, gentlemen, *lives will be lost.*”

“The Almighty has His own purposes. Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom offense cometh. If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove,

The Greatest American

and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from the Divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?"

"The battle of freedom is to be fought out on principle. Slavery is a violation of the eternal right. We have temporized with it from the necessities of our condition; but as sure as God reigns and school children read, that black, foul lie can never be consecrated into God's hallowed Truth."

"The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then Thirteen States expressly plighted, that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution

Abraham Lincoln

was, "to form a more perfect Union." . . . To the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. . . . I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union, that it will Constitutionally defend and maintain itself."

"Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature—opposition to it, in his love."

"In law it is good policy never to plead what you need not, lest you oblige yourself to prove what you cannot."

"Die when I may—I want it said of me by those who know me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower, where I thought a flower would grow."

"The reasonable man has long since agreed that intemperance is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of all evils among mankind."

"The purposes of the Almighty are perfect and must prevail, though we erring

The Greatest American

mortals may fail accurately to perceive them in advance."

"I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right; but it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."

"Many free countries have lost their liberty, and ours may lose hers; but, if she shall, be it my proudest plume, not that I was the last to desert, but that I never deserted her."

"Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty, as we understand it."

"I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know I am right because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God."

"This is a world of compensation, and he who would *be* no slave, must consent to *have* no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God cannot long retain it."

LINCOLN EPIGRAMS

We cannot escape history.

Let none falter who thinks he is right.

If slavery is not wrong then nothing is wrong.

Come what will, I will keep my faith with friend and foe.

There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law.

I authorize no bargains for the Presidency, and will be bound by none.

No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent.

I believe this Government cannot permanently endure half slave and half free.

Gold is good in its place; but living, brave and patriotic men are better than gold.

This Government must be preserved in spite of the acts of any man, or set of men.

Nowhere in the world is presented a Government of so much liberty and equality.

The Greatest American

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present.

Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy.

The fight must go on. The cause of civil liberty must not be surrendered at the end of one, or even one hundred defeats.

Emancipation has liberated the land as well as the people.

It is not fertility, but liberty that cultivates a country.

The severest justice may not always be the best policy.

By general law, life and limb must be protected; yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb.

Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them.

I do not, in theory, but I do, in fact, belong to the temperance society.

In giving freedom to the *slave*, we assure freedom to the *free*.

Abraham Lincoln

We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last, best hope of earth.

The States have their *status* in the Union and they have no other legal *status*. The Union is older than any of the States. Not one of them ever had a State Constitution independent of the Union.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it.

As a pilot I have used my best exertion to keep afloat our Ship of State, and shall be glad to resign my trust at the appointed time to another pilot, more skillful and successful, than I have been.

GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

“Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

“But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here,

Abraham Lincoln

but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

TRIBUTES

“I attempt no compliment to my own sagacity. I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly, that events have controlled me.” These words furnish a key to the whole character and career of Abraham Lincoln. He was no inspired Elijah or John the Baptist, no Royal singer of Israel, but a plain, true, earnest patriotic man, gifted with eminent common sense, wisdom and humor, which allied him intimately, warmly, with the masses of mankind. . . .

He was not a born King of men, ruling by resistless might of his natural superiority—but a child of the people, who made himself a great persuader, therefore a leader, by dint of firm resolve, and patient effort and persistence.

“His was the might that slumbers in the peasant’s arm!” . . . The majestic heritage, the measureless opportunity of the humblest youth. Here was an heir of pov-

Abraham Lincoln

erty and insignificance—obscure, untaught, buried throughout his childhood in the frontier forests—with no transcendent, dazzling abilities, such as make their way in any country, under any institution; but emphatically in intellect, as in station, one of the millions of strivers for a rude livelihood, who though attaching himself to the less popular party—did nevertheless become a central figure of the Western Hemisphere—and an object of honor, love, and reverence, throughout the world. I doubt whether man, woman or child, white or black, bond or free, virtuous or vicious, ever reached forth a hand to him and saw in his countenance or manner any shrinking from the proffered contact—any assumption of superiority—or betrayal of disdain. No one was ever more steeped in the spirit of that glorious lyric of the inspired Scotch ploughman—‘A man’s a man, for a’ that’; and no one was ever acquainted, and on terms of friendly intimacy with a greater number of human beings of all ranks and condi-

The Greatest American

tions . . . He won his way to eminence and renown, by ever doing the work that lay next to him—doing it with all his growing might—doing it as well as he could, and learning by his failures when failure was encountered—how to do it better. Never before did any one so constantly and visibly grow, under the discipline of incessant cares, anxiety and trials. There was probably no year of his life in which he was not a wiser, larger, better man, than he had been the year preceding. It was of such a nature—patient, if sometimes groping—but ever toward the light—that Tennyson sings:

Perplexed in faith but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubts,
Believe me, than in half our creeds.

I pass over his manifest determination to treat the prostrate South with unexampled magnanimity—the terrible crime, which quenched the life—at that moment of greater value to the rebels, than that of any other living man. . . .

Abraham Lincoln

“Perfect through suffering” is the Divine Law. The tension of mind and body, through the four years, had told fearfully upon his physical frame, . . . I do not believe he could have lived out his second term, had no felon hand been lifted against his priceless life. . . .

The Republic needed to be passed through chastening, purifying fires of adversity and suffering; other men were helpful to the great renovation, and nobly did their part. Yet, looking back through the lifting mists of the eventful, tragic, glorious years, I clearly discern that one Providential leader—the indispensable hero of the great drama—faithfully reflecting, even in his seeming hesitations, the sentiment of the masses—fitted by his short-comings for the burden laid upon him—the good to be wrought out through him—was Abraham Lincoln. — *Horace Greeley*, 1865.

He could receive counsel from a child, and give counsel to a sage. The simple

The Greatest American

approached him with ease, and the learned approached him with deference. . . .

We have done a great work for our race today. In doing honor to the memory of our friend and liberator, we have been doing highest honor to ourselves and those who are to come after us. We have been attaching to ourselves a name and fame imperishable and immortal. . . . If it shall be said that the colored man is soulless—that he has no appreciation of benefits or benefactors—we may calmly point to this monument we have this day erected to the memory of Abraham Lincoln.—*Frederick Douglass.*

At the unveiling of the Emancipation Monument, April 15, 1876, placed in Lincoln Park, Washington, by freed slaves.

He did not seek to say merely the thing that was for the day's debate, but the thing which would stand the test of time and square itself with eternal justice.—*James G. Blaine.*

Abraham Lincoln

President Lincoln excelled all his contemporaries, as he also excelled most of the eminent rulers of every time, in the humanity of his nature; in the constant assertion of reason over passion and feeling; in the art of dealing with men; in fortitude, never disturbed by adversity; in capacity for delay when action was fraught with peril; in the power of immediate and resolute decision when delays were dangerous; in comprehensive judgment which forecasts the final and best opinions of nations and of posterity; and in the union of enlarged patriotism, wise philanthropy, and the highest political justice, by which he was enabled to save a nation and emancipate a race.—*George S. Boutwell.*

Behold him! standing with hand reached out to feed the South with mercy and the North with charity, and the whole land with peace; when the Lord, who had sent him, called him, and his work was done.—*Phillips Brooks.*

The Greatest American

Four years ago, oh, Illinois, we took him from your midst, an untried man from among the people. Behold, we return him a mighty conqueror. Not thine, but the nation's; not ours, but the world's! Give him place, ye prairies! In the midst of this great continent his dust shall rest, a sacred treasure to myriads who shall pilgrim to that shrine, to kindle anew their zeal and patriotism.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

. . . He was by nature a diplomat. He knew the art of sailing against the wind. . . . He understood, not only the rights of individuals, but the rights of nations. In all his correspondence with other governments, he neither wrote, nor sanctioned, a line which afterward was used to tie his hands. . . . In the use of perfect English he easily rose above all his advisors and all his fellows. . . . He stood at the center and with infinite patience, consummate skill, the genius of goodness—directed, cheered, consoled, and conquered.

Abraham Lincoln

. . . He was wise enough to know that war is governed by the laws of war, and during the conflict, Constitutions are silent. . . . For the sake of slavery, millions stood by the Union—for the sake of Liberty millions knelt at the altar of the Union. Nothing is grander than to break chains from the bodies of men.

. . . The old flag still flies—the stars are there—the stains have gone. . . . He always saw the end. He advanced too rapidly for conservative politicians, too slowly for radical enthusiasts. He occupied the line of safety, and by force of his great personality, and charming candor, held the masses on his side. . . . The pardoning power is the only remnant of absolute sovereignty that a President has. Through all the years, he will be known as Lincoln the loving, Lincoln the merciful.

He always tried to do things the easiest way, and he was not particular about moving along straight lines. He did not tunnel mountains—he was willing to go round,

The Greatest American

and reach the end, as a river reaches the sea.

His criticism of military movements and correspondence with his Generals, show that he was at all times master of the situation—a natural strategist—appreciated difficulties and advantages of every kind. In “the still and mental” field of war, he stood the peer of any man beneath the flag. . . .

Had McClellan followed his advice, he would have taken Richmond. Had Hooker acted on his suggestion, Chancellorsville would have been a victory for the Nation. His political prophecies were all fulfilled. . . . In his brain there was no cloud—in his heart no hate. He longed to save the South as well as the North—to see the Nation one and free.

He lived until the end was known—until the Confederacy was dead—until Lee surrendered—until the doors of Libby Prison were opened—until the Republic was supreme. He lived until Lincoln and Liberty were united forever. He lived to

Abraham Lincoln

cross the desert—to reach the palms of victory.

He lived until all loyal hearts were his—until the history of his deeds made music in the souls of men—until he knew that on Columbia's Calendar of fame, his name stood first. What he did was worth living for, worth dying for. He lived until he stood in the midst of universal Joy, beneath the outstretched wings of Peace—the foremost man in all the world.

And then the horror came. Night fell on noon. The Saviour of the Republic, the breaker of chains, the liberator of millions,—he who had assured “freedom to the free,” was dead.

Upon his brow Fame placed the immortal wreath, and for the first time in the history of the world, a Nation bowed and wept. His memory is the strongest, tenderest tie that binds all hearts together now, and holds all States beneath a Nation's flag.

The most precious treasure of the Great Republic is the memory of Abraham Lincoln.—*Robert G. Ingersoll.*

The Greatest American

The character of Abraham Lincoln is not yet known to this generation, as it will be to those who shall live in later centuries. They will see, as we cannot yet perceive, the full maturity of his wisdom in its actual effects upon the destinies of two great races of men. . . . Had he lived to full age, his guidance of the emancipation that he decreed under military law, would have saved both races from many rough experiences that it has produced. . . . The character of Mr. Lincoln was clearly displayed in his conduct of the War, but he was deprived of the opportunity for its full development in a period of peace and security. His most conspicuous virtue, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, was the absence of a spirit of resentment, or oppression toward the enemy, and the self-imposed restraint under which he exercised the really absolute powers within his grasp. For this, all his countrymen revere his memory, rejoice in the excellence of his fame, and those who failed in the great struggle hold him in

Abraham Lincoln

grateful esteem.—*John T. Morgan*, Confederate General,—Senator from Alabama—on the thirtieth anniversary of President Lincoln's death.

You ask that which he found a piece of property and turned into a free American citizen to speak to you on Abraham Lincoln. I am not fitted by ancestry or training to be your teacher for, as I have stated, I was born a slave.

My first knowledge of Abraham Lincoln came in this way: I was awakened early one morning before the dawn of day as I lay wrapped in a bundle of rags on the dirt floor of our slave cabin, by the prayers of my mother, just before leaving for her day's work, as she was kneeling over my body earnestly praying that Abraham Lincoln might succeed and that one day she and her boy might be free. You give me the opportunity here this evening to celebrate with you and the nation the answer to that prayer. . . .

Interwoven into the warp and woof of this human complexity, is the moving

The Greatest American

story of men and women of nearly every race and color in their progress from slavery to freedom, from poverty to wealth, from weakness to power, from ignorance to intelligence. Knit into the life of Abraham Lincoln is the story and success of the nation in the blending of all tongues, religions, colors, races, into one composite nation, leaving each group and race free to live its own separate social life, and yet all a part of the great whole.

Says the great book somewhere, though a man die, yet shall he live. If this is true of the ordinary man, how much more true it is of the hero of the hour and the hero of the century—Abraham Lincoln? One hundred years of the life and influence of Lincoln is the story of the struggle, the trials, ambitions and triumphs of the people of our American civilization.—*Booker Washington*, Feb. 12, 1909.

As the years roll by and as all of us, wherever we dwell, grow to feel an equal pride in the valor and self-devotion alike

Abraham Lincoln

of the men who wore the blue and the men who wore the gray, so this whole nation will grow to feel a peculiar sense of pride in the man whose blood was shed for the Union of his people and for the freedom of a race; the lover of his country and of all mankind; the mightiest of the mighty men who mastered the mighty days—Abraham Lincoln.—*Theodore Roosevelt*, Feb. 12, 1909.

He had finished his work; the perpetuity of the Union was established. The house had “ceased to be divided,” and the country had forever become “all free.”—*John C. Spooner*, Feb. 12, 1909.

To him more than any other man we owe, and shall for all time owe, the joy, the power and the gift of peace of a mighty people joined together as they never were before, under one flag and one covenant of law.

And at last all see, what only part could see at first, the vital truth of the text to which he turned at Chicago before the election, “A house divided against itself

The Greatest American

cannot stand," repeated on the great seal of Kentucky: "United we stand, divided we fall."

For him there is no need of any memorial place or token. He lives and will forever live in the hearts of all the people of all the earth as the man of the people, grand in simple, noble, dignity, almost strange in wisdom and prophetic foresight as if it were a gift direct from God.—*Governor Wilson of Kentucky*, Feb. 12, 1909.

In victory and defeat, in hope and despair, through four frightful years of civil war he guided our destinies to peace and made us a free and united nation. His life was glorified in his death. He fell a martyr at the foot of his finished work—his work upon which humanity will forever shower its tears and God His benediction. So we gather on the centennial of his birth to take fresh inspiration from his life for service and sacrifice, if need be, for the common good.—*Governor Deneen of Illinois*, Feb. 12, 1909.

The Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863

By the President of the United States of America

Whereas, *On the 22nd day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a Proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things the following, to-wit:*

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as Slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforth, and FOREVER FREE, and the EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, including the military and naval authorities thereof, WILL RECOGNIZE AND MAINTAIN THE FREEDOM of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof respectively shall then be in rebellion against the United States, and the fact that any State, or the people thereof shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, Therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, *by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed Rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said Rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaim for the full period of one hundred days from the day of the first above-mentioned order, and designate, as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to-wit: AR-*

KANSAS, TEXAS, LOUISIANA, (*except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, La Fourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of Orleans*), MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH CAROLINA, AND VIRGINIA, (*except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia and also the counties of Berkely, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabetheth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth*), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this Proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that ALL PERSONS HELD AS SLAVES within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward SHALL BE FREE! and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the Military and Naval Authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free, to abstain from all violence, UNLESS IN NECESSARY SELF-DEFENCE, and I reccommend to them that in all cases when allowed, they LABOR FAITHFULLY FOR REASONABLE WAGES.

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of ALMIGHTY GOD.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my name, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

[L. s.] Done at the City of WASHINGTON, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-seventh.

William H. Seward

Secretary of State.

By the President.

A. Lincoln

LINCOLN STATUE

When the Lincoln Statue Commission decided to permit one full-sized replica of the bronze Statue to be cast, it was the active interest of Richard Lloyd Jones, and the generosity of Thomas E. Brittingham, that made possible this great gift to the University of Wisconsin. Mr. Jones is a member of the Commission, Associate Editor of *Collier's Weekly*, and alumnus of the University. Mr. Brittingham is a resident of Madison, and with largeness of view appreciated the opportunity to serve the University and the State.

The following strong and beautiful word picture of the future influence of the Statue, is from the address of acceptance, by the President of the University of Wisconsin, February 12, 1909.

“It will be remembered that a lad named Ernest, created by Hawthorne's imagination, growing up in a village set in a broad and deep valley, had his attention called



THE WEINMAN STATUE OF LINCOLN

Erected by appropriation of the Congress of the United States, and the Legislature of Kentucky, and unveiled on Decoration Day, 1909, in the Court House Square of Lincoln's native town, Hodgenville, Kentucky. The only replica of this Statue was purchased by Mr. Thomas E. Brittingham of Madison, Wisconsin, and presented to the University of Wisconsin — placed in the Court of Honor, and unveiled the 22d of June, 1909.

The Greatest American

by his mother to the noble lineaments of a Great Stone Face on a mighty buttress of one of the surrounding mountains. Among the people there was a tradition that some time a native of the valley would appear with a face like the gigantic one in stone. The growing boy continued his life among the villagers, and each morning he looked out upon the strong and benignant Great Stone Face, and hoped that he might some day see the man who was its image. The boy reached manhood and middle age, doing the work of a villager, and lending a hand to his neighbors. Gradually he became a source of strength to the people with whom he was in contact, and very slowly as age grew upon him, his fame extended far beyond his native valley. Several times a celebrated man, born in the valley, returned from the outer world. Each time Ernest looked eagerly forward to his coming, hoping that he would resemble the Great Stone Face. Each time when the noted man appeared, Ernest was profoundly disappointed, but still

Abraham Lincoln

hoped that before he died he would see in a man the likeness of the face of stone. One evening, while addressing the villagers, as had become his habit, a poet visitor saw the truth, and cried:

‘Behold, behold, Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face.’ During his many years of deep reflection upon the inner meaning of things, and of faithful service to his fellows, his features had become the counterpart of his ideal.

It cannot be doubted that the bronze face of Abraham Lincoln will modify the spiritual faces of the students of the University who are to view daily the sad, calm, determined, and rugged face of our great President of the Civil War. What this Lincoln Statue will do in the way of developing nobility of character and sustained courage to carry forward the fight for the advancement of the people of this country, no one may foretell; but that it will be perpetually one of the great and high educational forces of the university, no one may doubt. From it, during the

The Greatest American

centuries to come, many hundreds of thousands of students will gain at least a reflection of the spirit of service to their country that animated Abraham Lincoln. They will persist to the end in the great fight for right and equal justice to all, even as did this man of sorrow. This spirit will pass in some measure to the millions with whom they come in contact, and gradually the widening influence for good of the Lincoln Statue will extend throughout the world."

Abraham Lincoln

“Between the Mourners at his head and feet,
Say, Scuriel-jester, is there room for you?”

Yes, repentent; humble repentent. There is
room for you,—There is room for all,—for

“That was the grandest funeral

That ever passed on earth.”

Did the bells toll? We heard them not.

Did the guns give parting tribute? We listed not.

Tear stained faces, bowed heads, and list-
less hands were all we saw—the stifled sobs of a
Nation, all we heard.

From city, to city the silent train passed on,
bearing the one sable shrouded casket.

The nation’s emblem for a pall; and ever,
the crowding, clinging mourners between
The head and feet. From the Northern Ocean
to the Southern Seas, was only this:

A silence born of grief, too mighty for words;
too deep for moans. And thus they bore him on
and laid him in the quiet grave, among his own.

He had given his life for us; could “we give
him but a grave”?

“O lonely grave in Moab’s land!

O dark Beth-Peor’s hill!

Speak to these curious hearts of ours,

And teach them to be still.

God hath His mysteries or grace,

Ways that we cannot tell;

He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep

Of him He loved so well.

—*Clara Barton*, Feb. 12, 1909.

The Greatest American

The prairies to the mountains call,
The mountains to the sea;
From shore to shore a nation keeps
Her martyr's memory.

Though lowly born, the seal of God
Was in that rugged face;
Still from the humble Nazareths come
The Saviors of the race.

With patient heart and vision clear
He wrought through trying days—
“Malice toward none, with charity for all,”
Unswerved by blame or praise.

And when the morn of Peace broke through
The battle's cloud and din,
He hailed with joy the promised land
He might not enter in.

He seemed as set by God apart,
The winepress trod alone;
Now stands he forth an uncrowned king,
A people's heart his throne.

Land of our loyal love and hope,
O Land he died to save,
Bow down, renew today thy vows
Beside his martyr grave!

—*Frederick L. Hosmer*, Feb. 12, 1909.

71.2009.084.01870

